

The Young Man's Duty.

A

Discourse

Shewing

**The Necessity of seeking the Lord
betimes, as also the Danger and
Unreasonableness in trusting to a late**

О.А.

Death-bed-repentance.

Designed especially for Young Persons,
before they are debauched by evil
Company, and evil Habits.

By **RICH. KIDDER M.A.**

Τὸ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ καὶ τῆς ἐκκλησίας τῆς ἐκείνης, τὸ πᾶσαν ἡμῶν
 ὡς τελειοποιεῖν δεξιότητα. Marc. Antonin
 lib. 7.

LONDON.

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THE BOSTON GAZETTE

A



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T H E
Preface.



THE Author of these Papers do easily foresee, that this following Discourse will not be welcom to sundry sorts of Readers: As for those that are curious, and that are pleased only with Novelties, he expects to be despised by such. For he knows, that these Athenians spend their time in hearing or telling some new thing, and he will not wonder that these men should call him Babler. Nor does he much value the Censures of those men that had rather be learned then holy. But yet he hopes, if the following Discourse carry with it truth, that he shall not deserve a Censure, because it is not trim as well as true: For as he was

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at first cast upon these Meditations, to supply the necessities of such as required all plainness of speech, so it is now made publick for the benefit of such; And if to any such, whose hearts are better then their heads, this Treatise shall afford any spiritual advantage, the Author will most cheerfully undergo the scorn of the more curious Reader: since his design in publishing these things was, not to entertain the Reader with quaint and airy forms of speech, but, faithfully to represent to him the great necessity of reformation in heart and life. And certainly, it would be a great Piece of vanity in so weighty a matter as this is, to flourish with affected and ostentatious forme of speech; And some men would question the truth of what we say; if we should dress our Discourses in such a Pedantry as Boyes do their Declamations. That man would be very cruel, that should see his Neighbours house on fire, but yet would

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would not give his Neighbour notice of his danger, till he had studied a quaint speech to deliver the sad tidings with. When the flames of Hell are approaching apace to the men we preach to, the danger will command us to be earnest, but not oblige us to be eloquent. We must rather do as the Angels did by Lot, who instead of holding him with an eloquent Harangue, told him plainly of the danger that did approach, and while he lingered, laid their hands on him, and brought him out of the City.

To others this following Discourse will be unwelcome, not onely because it hath been so hardy to come abroad in publick, when there are so many Books already that can finde no Entertainment; But also because this Argument hath already been handled by men of great worth and name. And indeed it cannot be denied that the world is too full

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of Books, and that this Subject hath bin insisted on by men of great abilities. But then every one does not meet with what hath been said, nor can every one understand them, and there are very few that heed them, and yet is the thing it self of very great concernment to the souls of men. And indeed, considering how frequently men delude themselves with a promise of death-bed Repentance, and how they transgress in the mean time, and make their Accounts swell, and the Author having had too much sad experience of the prevailing of this conceit among those that have bin committed to his care, thought himself obliged to bear witness against such a mistake as is at once both very common and very pernicious.

But there is another sort of Readers, who though they may peruse the things that are here offered, and let them pass without a censure, will not be persuaded to an effectual and speedy Reformation.

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mation. The most undeniable Reasons, the most passionate Exhortations, the most earnest Intreaties will not prevail with them presently to forsake all their sins, and to love and serve God. They will still put the evil day far from them, and promise themselves time and grace enough to repent hereafter; and if one should arise from the dead, and from the damned, yet would they not be perswaded to make haste. These men are buried in sensual delights and pleasures, and have acquainted themselves with those things only that gratifie and please the animal life, they have bin brought up in sin and foolish pleasures, and taught to admire the pomp and gaiety of this present world, and to pursue earnestly the designs of their pride, and lust, and covetousness, and think that a little after-care about their souls, a few hopeful words at last will satisfie Almighty God for all. They know some care must be taken about their souls

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souls before they die, that they must repent and amend, and this they resolve to do some time before their death.

I shall not forbear to say something to such a man that thus delays his repentance, over and above what he may find in the ensuing Discourse, by which it will appear, however he may deceive his own soul, that when he puts off his repentance to hereafter, in all probability he will never repent at all, but die in his sins, and be miserable to all eternity. And to convince such a man, that this may very justly be presumed and feared, I shall desire him to consider with me the following Severals, which will make it very probable, that whereas he says he will repent hereafter, that yet he will never repent at all.

1. Consider, thou that sayest thou wilt repent hereafter, what should be the reason why thou canst not do it now; and whether the very same reason

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reason that hinders thee from reforming now, will not always hinder thee: Say what it is, thou that makest these delays, that keeps thee from reforming presently; it is the want of power to do it; and how dost thou know thy ability will be greater hereafter than now? Is it because the Rules of the Gospel are severe and strict, and will they not be as severe hereafter as now they are? Or dost thou hope, that God will unbend his Laws, which are unalterable, and stoop to thy prophaneness? Or dost thou delay thy amendment, because thy sins are many and great, and thou despairest of mercy? And will not the heap be as great hereafter as now? Is it thy worldly business, and will it not always be so? That which now hinders thee, will always do so, till it is taken out of the way: things standing as they are, the issue and event must needs be the same.

That

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*That which makes thee unfit to day,
wil make thee as unfit to morrow; Nay*

2. More unfit. Thou

*Citius sibi plagarum
care sociatur quod
non diu hiare per-
mittitur. Salu. ad
Ecl. Cath 1.1.*

*art like to be more
unfit every day then
other. It is here
as in a wound or*

*sore, the longer it continues, the more
hard it is to cure it, whereas a timely
dressing may cure it quickly: A dis-
ease that is timely taken is easily cu-
red; but if it stay till it have altered
the blood, and have amassed together a
load of filth, and destroyed the tone
and strength of the Principal Parts,
and brought in a general ill habit of
body; it may then be past all remedy.
Whatever unfits thee now, will make
thee much more unfit hereafter. For
as the work will then be more hard, so
will thy strength be weaker, thy time
shorter, thy discouragements greater,
and thy temptations and objections
more and more strong then they were
before. He that thinks of repenting on
his*

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his death-bed, should remember that he will have a greater task to do, and less time and strength to do it in then now he hath.

If thy sins are so many and so great now, that thou dost almost despair of mercy, certainly they will be more and greater then: if it be troublesom to thee now to look back upon thy old scores, surely there will be more of labour and discouragement in it, to undo and unravel the many sins of a long life: if now thou thinkest the Commands of Christ severe and strict, certainly hereafter, when thou hast been more engaged in sin, and longer wedded to the world, and thy lusts are faster riveted to thy soul, thou wilt think more hardly of a holy life, and the Commands of Christ will be more grievous to thee. If now it be so hard a task, what wilt thou think it when thy day is almost spent, and
thy

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thy Sun a setting ! if it be hard now to cast out the unclean spirit, and bind the strong man ; What a task will it be when there are more evil spirits to cast out. *If the Ethiopian can change his skin, or the Leopard his spots, then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.*

3. Consider, thou that sayest thou wilt repent hereafter, whether thou hast not formerly promised to repent, and yet broken thy word, and if thou hast, why shouldest thou believe thy self again. Didst thou never upon some sick bed, or under some great danger, make a Vow, that if God would deliver thee, he should be thy God ; and yet for all that, when the danger hath been over, thou hast returned to thy sins and evil ways again. And hast thou not as much reason as ever to think, that as thou didst then but dissemble with God, so
now

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now thou didst but mock him. Thy deceitful heart is still in thy breast, and as ready to impose upon thee as ever it was.

4. Consider, thou that sayst thou wilt repent *tomorrow*, when this *morrow* will come; Thou wilt repent *hereafter* thou sayest, but that is an uncertain and *unlimited* word, whereas God *limiteth* a *certain day*, saying, *To day if ye will hear his voice*, Heb. 4. 7. And again, *Behold, now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation*, 2 Cor. 6. 2. God says *Now*, we say *Hereafter*: God says *to day*; we say, *tomorrow*: Gods time is come, but when will our time come? It is a worthy saying of one of the Ancients, Ἀνεῖμας δὲ τὸ τῆς λαμβάνει τῆς ἀλδς. That, *tomorrow hath no end*. And it were well if

it were not too often verified in the dangerous delay of sinners,

Modo & modo non habent modum, Aug.

whose

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whose ~~tomorrow~~ and hereafter hath many times no bounds or stops, and is as far from coming to an end, as an Eternity it self. For he that makes delays makes no Progress at all, and is therefore very elegantly compared by *Solomon*, to a door that is turned upon its hinges, Prov. 26: 14. For as such a door, though it may be opened and clap'd too, yet makes no progress at all, being held by the hinges to which it is fastened: so the slothful sinner is held fast by his delays till he be unhinged by a very effectual change. He that uses delays, how fair soever he speak, yet does not advance at all: He is like the hindermost wheels of a Chariot or Coach, which are indeed near the foremost wheels, and seem to run with a design to overtake them, but yet being fastned to a lower Axel-tree, they never make any nearer approaches to them,

Nam

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*Nam quamvis prope te, quamvis te-
mone sub uno,
Vertentem sese, frustra sectabere Can-
thum,
Cum rota posterior curras & in axe se-
cundo.*

2. There is no end of these de-
lays; They are the devils device to
draw thee into an inevitable destru-
ction; 'tis the Sluggard that says,
*Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a
little folding of the hands to sleep,*
so shall his Poverty come as one that
travelleth, and his want as an Armed
man. The Devil can well endure
thou shouldest promise to reform
hereafter, as long as in the mean
time thou livest in thy sins. But it
is a great peradventure whether e-
ver we shall repent or not, if we do
not do it presently. For 'tis likely
that he that promises tomorrow to
begin

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begin his repentance (and perhaps hath done for some years past,) should, when *tomorrow* comes, promise the next day, and so onwards till there be no time left to run out. This is well exprest by the Satyrist.

*Cras hoc fiet ; idem cras fiet ; quid ?
quasi magnum*

Nempe diem donas. Sed cum lux altera venit.

Fam cras hesternum consumsumus aliud cras.

Egerit hos annos, & semper paulum erit ultra.

Tomorrow shall my work be done,

Or, when tomorrow's past and gone.
The

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The next day shall *my morrow* be,

A day shall break no squares
with me.

He grants too little that doth give

But one day both to turn and live.

But when another day's come on,

Our *first tomorrow's* fled and gone;

Another morrow then makes haste,

And our remaining time doth waste;

And thus we make no steps, but say

We still expect another day.

And therefore I shall earnestly
beseech the Reader to use no more
vain delays, but to hasten out of
his sins, and immediately to turn
unto the Lord his God, who will

be
the

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be better to him then all his worldly profits and pleasures can. This if he do at all, he must do quickly: *We must tread upon thorns while our shoes are upon our feet:* There can be no fitter opportunity then the present to set upon this work. He that depends upon his last hour is like to be deceived: The Jews have a saying to this purpose worth our heeding *He that puts off the hour, the hour shall put him off.* He that neglects the present season out of hopes of one to come, is likely to be deceived at last.

Now the Lord grant, that what is here offered may do good to the souls of men. That we may so effectually lay these things to heart, that they may not make for our condemnation at that great day. If the Reader receive any advantage by what is here offered, the Author desires him first

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first to give God the praise, and then to pray for him that hath made these things publike, that when he preaches to others, he himself may not be a cast-away.

THE

THE YOUNG MAN'S DUTY.



H H T

(1)

The Young-Man's DUTY
&c.



Here cannot be a more dangerous, nor is there a more prevailing error among those that call themselves Christians then this, that though we lead our lives as we list, yet we shall be undoubtedly happy hereafter, if upon our Death-beds we repent us of our sins; when yet by repenting we mean no more, but a crying unto God for mercy, and a crying out upon our selves as great sinners: If we can, like the Serpent, become straight before we die, though our whole life were crooked and perverse, we shall think well of our selves, and shall be thought to have made a godly
B and

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and comfortable end, and to be unquestionably gone to a better place. Thus will a charitable Neighborhood judge, and perhaps the Preacher too at the Funerals will confidently pronounce it, and then 'tis easily believed; and every sinner comforts up himself in his evil ways, and thinks to get to Heaven at last at as cheap a rate. By this means the great purposes of the Gospel are made void, and the design of our Saviours appearing defeated: Men think a good life is not of absolute necessity in order to their future happiness, and they take no longer care how they live, the most they aim at is, that they may die with a parcel of good words in their mouths. They run on in their sins in the mean-while, and think it will be soon enough to repent when they make their Wills, or when they lie a dying: Thus the poor sinner is blinded, and makes haste

to



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to fill up the measure of his iniquity, and repents not till he do it with the flames of Hell about him, till it be too late, and to no purpose. Many that are now in eternal torments, made haste to them with these foolish hopes about them: And we that remain behind them are posting on apace to the same lamentable destruction; I shall endeavour, with Gods assistance, to disabuse such men as these, and to shew them their great mistake, before they feel the sad effects of it in sorrows that are unspeakable. I shall shew the very great untruth, as well as the unreasonableness, and infinite danger of this conceit, and take off all those popular pretences and exceptions which the sinner can bring to confirm himself in his misbelief. God Almighty grant, that what is offered may be a means to stop the sinner in his career, and send him

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home to himself, and to his God. I do conjure the Reader, as he loves his own soul, and as he would not be eternally miserable, that he would consider seriously what is here offered, that he would do it in his retirement and calmest thoughts, reflecting how far he is concerned in these things: I shall proceed and shew the great vanity of this conceit by sundry Arguments.

CHAP. I.

And first of all, this will appear to be a great mistake, if we do but consider duly the nature of true repentance; which (however we thrust it into a narrow room) we shall find to be a duty more difficult and comprehensive, and which requires more time and pains than men are generally apt to believe it does. For though we frequently speak

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of Repentance, and pretend to it, and hear it preached of, yet, I feare, it is but little understood and less practised ; and when men so little understand what Repentance is, it is no wonder that they mistake so widely in this whole Affair. The doctrine of Repentance is the foundation of the spiritual building, *Heb. 6. 1.* which if it be not well laid, we build our house upon the Sands, and such an house must needs fall, *Mat. 7. 27.* Before I come to shew what Repentance is, I shall vindicate it from those mistakes that men are in about it.

1. They are much mistaken that think Repentance no more but a parcel of good words, a loud crying to God for mercy, and exclaiming against our selves as great sinners ; This we can easily do, and love our sins nevertheless when we have done ; It breaks none of our bones to do this, it puts us to no
B 3 pain

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pain at all, nay, we can do it, and yet be inwardly pleased with our sin in the mean-while; This is all the Repentance that many men have or aim at; They sin, and they confess; but then they sin again, and confess again, and keep this round while they live. Many

Eadem penè omnes jugiter faciunt, quæ fecissè plangunt. Salv. de Gub. Dei lib. 3.

men do that which a little before they confessed was their sin, and they will confess it again presently, and yet go on to commit again the same things. *This black Circle (as one well said) of Sin, and confess, Confess and sin, encompasses as well Protestants as Papists.* We think ourselves very safe in this Circle, and that our sins cannot do us more hurt then our confession does us good; But certainly, we have very base and low thoughts of God, if we think to charm and cheat him thus easily, if we think
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he will be mocked with such ineffectual confessions as these are; What man would endure such usage as this! Will our Neighbour be pleased with us, because we confess we have done him wrong, when he sees we continue to do so still. This were indeed an easie way to Heaven, a very sick man, and the most guilty might soon do this; I shall transcribe the words of a grave Author upon this occasion;

If, says he, Sir W. Rawleigh
his Preface to
the History of
the World.
according to St. Peter,
the righteous shall

scarcely be saved, and that God spared not his Angels, where shall those appear, who having served their appetites all their lives, presume to think that the severe Commandments of the All-Powerful God were given but in sport, and that the short breath we draw when death presseth us, if we can but fashion it to the sound of mercy, is sufficient? -- But what shall we call a disesteeming.

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an opposing, or (indeed) a mocking of God; if those men do not oppose him, disesteem him and make him, that think it enough for God, to ask him forgiveness at leisure, with the remainder and last drawing of a malicious breath? For what do they otherwise that die this kind of well-dying, but say unto God as followeth? We beseech thee, O God, that all the falsehoods, forswearings, and treacheries of our lives past, may be pleasing unto thee; that thou wilt for our sakes, (that have had no leisure to do any thing for thine) change thy nature (though impossible) and forget to be a just God; that thou wilt love injuries and oppressions; call Ambition, Wisdom; and Charity, foolishness. — Certainly these wise Worldlings have either found out a new God, or made one; and in all likelihood, such a leaden one as Lewis the eleventh wore in his Cap; which when he caused any that he feared or hated, to be killed, he would take it from his head

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head and kiss it, beseeching it to pardon him this one evil Act more, and it should be the last; Mockeries indeed fit to be used towards a leaden, but not towards the everliving God: Thus he.

Certainly, the Devil can well endure we should confess our sins, if we forsake them not; we shall not much disturb him by speaking against his works, if we destroy them not. These are words of course,

that neither trouble the devil, nor yet please God. The Souldiers of Christ must fight, as well as thus bid defiance against his sins. *Plutarch* tells us, that when *Memnon* heard one of his Souldiers to rail against the *Grecian* King, against whom he was entertained to fight, that he stroke him with

his Lance, and told him, *Vide Plat. Apophegm.*
He did not maintain him

to rail, but to fight against Alexander. Certainly we shall shew at once more courage, as well as

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more sincerity, by forsaking our sins then by speaking evil of them.

2. They are much mistaken that think all sorrow that arises in their minds, upon occasion of their sins, is true Repentance. As if any sorrow, occasioned by reason of our sins, were that sorrow which is after a godly sort. Such men are ready to think, that a melancholick fit, a few sighs and groans, an hanging down the head like a bulrush, and a retiring a while from our mirth and company, a soure face, and moist eyes make up the whole and summe of Repentance. This certainly is a very wide mistake, for though this sorrow may be a step to, or a companion of true Repentance, yet alone it comes much short of the main work. For such men as these many times dislike the punishment, not the fault, and grieve not so much because themselves are wicked, as because God
is

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is just. Their sin brings a trouble upon them, it is the *trouble*, not the *sin* that makes them sorrowful. They have a certain Presage of the uneasiness of the flames of hell, their galled and aking conscience flies in their faces, they feel heavy strokes upon their hearts, for those sins which the World does not see; This makes them pale, and dumpish, when they receive upon their souls the lesser strokes of Hell, and when they see the hand-writing point at them,— *Tacita sudant praeordia culpa*. This will make the stoutest son of *Anak* bend, and yet does it not make him a true Penitent. For the most wicked men may repent at this rate, and many times does it: Thus *Judas*, when he had betrayed our Saviour, when he saw he was condemned, *repented himself*, Mar. 27. 3. That is, his Conscience had told him he had done greatly amiss in that *he had betrayed innocent blood,*

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blood, v. 4. He had a great sorrow upon him, a most excessive grief upon his minde, so great and so pressing, that there are that are ready to think, that (however our Translation tell us, that he went *and hanged himself*) he died of grief and sorrow, that there was no other thing that strangled and choaked him but that; For it is thought, the word which we translate *hang'd himself*, signifies being oppress'd with grief and melancholy, with a sorrow so far from a godly sorrow, that it worketh death; *Judas* being strangled with his grief and sorrow, when yet no man will think that he had any repentance unto life; thus may we find an *Ahab* rending his clothes, putting on sackcloth upon his flesh, nay, fasting, lying in sackcloth, and going softly, 1 Kings 21 27. In so much that God himself takes notice how he humbles him-

him-

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himself ; Others we may find *howling upon their beds*, Hos. 7. 14. and yet they are far from true Repentance, for it seems they did *not cry unto God with their hearts*; their want made them howl indeed, but not repent ; for they *assembled for corn and wine*, and yet *rebelled against God*. The disgrace, and shame, and misery which the sinners wickedness has brought upon him may make him truly *sorrowful*, when yet he is far from being truly *penitent*. These things may humble the sinner greatly, and this Humiliation may keep off from him some *temporal* judgment, but will not secure him from an *eternal* one.

3. They are as much mistaken that take passionate resolutions of amendment for Repeutance, that mistake the purpose and intention for the thing it self. We are indeed sometimes in good moods, and then we are resolved for Heaven, and for
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an holier life. Thus it is many times with some men, that notwithstanding all this are slaves to the Devil, and led captive by him at his will. Such men finde they are in great slavery, through the chains and fetters with which the Devil and their own lust hath bound them, these out of a sense of this are ready to say, *Let us break their bands asunder, and cast their cords from us.* These men are surfeited by their sins, lashed by their consciences, terrified by their convictions, or sometime awakened by the judgements of God that follow them, and then they resolve most passionately to lay by their troublesom sins, and walk in the more pleasant and more lightsom ways of Peace. How happy were it for them if they had courage and constancy enough to do what they so well resolve; But alas, these men (though they call these purposes

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poses by the name of repentance) return quickly to their vomit and wallowing in the mire; And then their Actions testifie to their faces they did but dissemble with God. These purposes are like the sudden resolutions that some young men take up, that have been intemperate the last meal, to fast the next, because their late excess has laid an uneasie load upon them, which then they find very burdensom; but when time hath wrought off the heaviness of the first excess, they forget their vow of Fasting quickly; what the Apostle said of some, that they are *ever learning*, and yet *never come to the knowledge of the truth*, is true of these men, they are *ever repenting*, and yet *never arrive at true repentance*.

4. They are mistaken that think every outward abstaining from the grosser acts of sin, either deserves the name of Repentance, or that it
is

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is any certain sign of it. It is possible we may abstain from some sin, and be as faulty in something else.

Horat. — *Non ego avarum
Cum veto te fieri ; vappam ju-
beo, aut Nebulonem.*

One disease may leave a man, and yet another may invade and arrest him, which is as dangerous. Men exchange one sin for another, oftner then they forsake all. And such an Exchange they judge very pardonable. They commute some one sin for some other that they esteem more expedient. They leave their youthful lusts perhaps when they grow in years ; but then they are slaves to Covetousness or Ambition, or else are overgrown with Atheism or unbelief. Men will part with some sin they can best spare, or not so well follow, and think they have well acquitted them-

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themselves, though *Agag* and the fattest of the flock, their most desirable sins be spared. They will perhaps avoid the grosser enormities which the World observes most, and yet be full of more refined, spiritual and mental wickedness. They will not *kill*, but yet *hate* their brother, or are *angry with him without a cause*. They do not *commit adultery*, but yet they allow themselves to *lust*. They leave that sin which either they dare not or cannot follow, and not because they hate their sin, or love their God: Some Vices they abstain from, not out of disaffection, but out of Policy. Some other lust, it may be, has either more power, or more expedience; Nay, perhaps they sacrifice some of their lusts to the Religion they own, which they know exacts an obedience from them; It shall have some sins devoted to destruction that the rest
may

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may live ; And thus men do not only abstain from some sins, that they may keep others safe, but even strive against them too ; *And upon these terms Satan himself* (as one hath well said) *will allow us to mortifie some sins, nay, will himself cast the first stone at them : and like a rooking Gamester purposely lose these petty stakes, that he may afterwards sweep the board.*

These things I have named, are not worthy the name of Repentance, nor yet are they any certain or infallible signes of it ; Though where there is true Repentance, there these things also are ; Repentance requires this, and more then all this. It is a greater work, and makes a greater change then all the before-named particulars do amount unto ; it imports no less then a relinquishing all our sins, and a turning unto God. He that truly repents puts away every evil thing,

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thing, and subdues not only his sin, but his affection to it also. He puts off the old man, and puts on the new. For Repentance imports.

I. A turning from our sins; *A ceasing to do evil*, Isa. 1. 16. A leaving off our evil ways, and our evil affections; That is, we may turn from all our evil, from every sin, before we can be said to have repented truly, and not only leave our sin but hate it too; But that this may be the better understood we may take these following particulars.

(1) It is a turning from our sin when we have power to commit it. Of many men it may be truly said, that their sin rather leaves them, then they that; To leave off our sin when we can follow it no longer deserves no thanks, much less the name of true Repentance. It is too true an observation of *Siracides*, *There is, says he, that is bind-*
dred

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dred from sinning through want, chap.

20. v. 21. We want strength, or means, or an opportunity and temptation, oftner then we do a will to commit sin. He that follows his lust till a decrepit age, hath put out his fire ; He that drinks and games till he hath spent his estate and his

Peccare non desinit, quem in extremis- situm recedere a crisi- minibus sola facit impossibilitas non voluntas. Salv. ad eccl. Cathol. lib. i.

credit too ; In a word, he that continues in his sin as long as he is able to follow it, does not forsake his sin, but his sin forsakes him. The man is the same though his strength and power be not : His *actions* are not what they were, but his *mind* is : And certainly God looks upon a man as he is in his mind and inclination, not as he is forced to be in his outward carriage. He is a Thief in Gods account (though he actually steal nothing) that would not fear to steal if he were sure that his wicked-

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wickedness might be hid or go unpunished; And he is a drunkard in Gods account, that would commit that excess, were it not that he wanted means, or feared the Magistrate: Where there is true repentance, the forsaking our sin is matter of *choice*, not *necessity*. We do not only *abstain* from our sins, but we *abhor* them. Our *affection* is changed as well as our *life*. Some men forsake their sins, as sick men do their meat which they love, they are denied it by their Physician as very dangerous for them, and therefore they forbear and yet long for it, and would gladly have the restraint taken off. Such men as these have the same desires as before, and that their actions are not the same also, is not the effect of their *choice*, but the result of a pressing *necessity*. But thus far we are hypocrites and dissemblers, not true penitents. But then that man that turns from his
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fin in his youth, and in his health, that wants neither power nor wealth to follow his sin, nor an opportunity to use that power, nor yet a temptation to embrace that opportunity, and yet abstains from his sin for no other cause, but because he loves God, and fears his displeasure, and hates his sin, this man truly repents : especially if he adde

(2) Constancy to this : some men are very angry with their sins at fits, and for a short time, but by degrees their anger cools, and they run into the embraces of their sins again : They fall out with their sins just as a fond and foolish Lover falls out with his Mystress, when yet *una falsa Lachrymula*, a tear or a fair invitation, a smile or sigh shall make up this breach, and the man is then as fond and as foolish, as much a slave and servant as he was before. We are in little feuds and

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and bickerings against our sins, but they rise to no height, and continue no time. 'Tis our continuing in well-doing that speaks our repentance to be compleat. Many men are ready to think themselves free, who yet draw their chain after them, and are easily overcome by

Sin in fair Circumstances, Heb. 12.1. When
'Εὐλαβεῖται τοὺς
ἀμαρτίας' their sin comes to

them well arraied and attired, when it courts them, and importunately wooes them, when it comes to them, as *Jaël* did to *Slsera*, with a *Turn in, my Lord, turn into me, fear not,* Judg. 4.18. when it comes to the sinner like the strange woman, *Prov. 5.3.* whose *lips drop as an Honeycomb,* and *her Mouth smother then Oyle*; And makes an earnest proffer of pleasure and profit, *an all All this I'll give thee*; then the sinner falls into the embraces of his sins again, and becomes a vassal and

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and a slave again, and his love to his sin is, after his little quarrels with it, reintegrated and made strong: Such mens affections to their sins were never thoroughly subdued and mortified, their repentance was never perfect and compleat. *Know ye not* (says the Apostle) *that to whom ye yield your selves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness, Rom. 6. 16.* Not that I would be so understood, but that a man that hath truly repented may fall into some sins again, through infirmity or ignorance, through sudden surreption or surprise, and sometime through negligence and want of due care and watchfulness. But then

(3) This is against the constant bent and meaning, the bias and inclination of the man: 'Tis that which he constantly and earnestly desires to avoid and shun: He looks upon

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upon it as his great misery and unhappiness; And

(4.) He rises again by a true repentance, by an hearty and godly sorrow; if *Peter deny his Master*, we soon find that he goes out and *weeps bitterly*; if such a man miss his way, yet he turns back again, and renews his pace, and doubles his diligence, and returns home to his father again, and this leads me to the second part of Repentance, viz.

II. A turning to God: *I will go to my father*, says the Prodigal son; and this may be called *Conversion*: But that we may the better understand what is implied in this, we may take the import of it in the following Severals. Now this turning to God does comprehend in it and suppose together

(1) A due sight and sense of the danger and misery of our present condition that we are in, and here
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it begins. The sinner begins to consider now what he does, and whither he is going; he begins to discern his danger and misery. He is like a man newly awakened out of a deep sleep, when the house about him is on fire, when the Building trembles, and the Neighborhood cries out, and the flames begin to threaten him, and the man sees that danger which his sleep but now hid from his eyes. He sees himself now upon the very brink of Hell, and very near being devoured and swallowed up by those unquenchable flames. A fire from Heaven he sees is falling upon his *Sodom*, and the Avenger of blood he sees is following him, and his soul is in great distress for a City of Refuge to flee unto. He is like a traveller in a foreign land, that hath wandred securely from his right way, and is strayed into paths of very great hazard and danger.

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ger, which makes him doubtful and at a stand. His heart mis-gives him, and he now begins to consider with himself whether his way will lead him : He suspects his way too broad, and too much beaten to be that way that leads to life : He remembers now that he hath heard his Saviour say, that the way is narrow and strait that leads to life, and that there be but few that find it : And he now remembers that God hath told him that the paths that he treads in will bring him unto death. He remembers that, that it is plainly said, that *without Holiness no man shall see God*, Heb. 12. 14. And then he considers what a sad portion of things abides for him, how unable he is to lie down in everlasting burnings, and to lose the favour of God for ever, whose favour is better then life it self : He knows there is but a very little

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distance between him and eternal destruction, and that if God take away his life he is undone for ever, and that nothing in this world can countervail so great a loss as the favour of God, and the eternal welfare of his soul. Thus does the Convert begin his Conversion: Thus the Psalmist did, *I thought upon my ways,* (says he) *and turned my feet unto thy Testimonies,* Psal. 119. 59. And the Prodigal son did thus also, he made this the first step towards his amendment, for of him the first good tidings, and hopeful presage we meet with is that which we read, *Luke 15. 17. When he came to himself, he said, how many hired servants of my fathers have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger?*

(2) A firm resolution of turning to God. *I will arise and go to my father;* says the Prodigal son: And this resolution the true Penitent does

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does not take up lightly and rashly neither, as many do that soon repent them of their repentance, but upon mature consideration he is resolved for God and Heaven whatever it cost him; though he pluck out his right eye, and cut off his right hand: That is, though he part with his most beloved sins: He will have the Pearl though he sell all he have, and endure great hardship to obtain it. He is willing to accept of Jesus Christ as his Lord and Master, as well as his Priest and Saviour; that is, he is as willing to be ruled by Christ as to be saved by him. He resolves to obey his Saviour, and to follow him through all difficulties and dangers. He will not leave him though others do; though his Friends and Relatives, the wife of his Bosom, or the son of his strength forsake him, and serve other Gods: Just as it was with Ruth, so is it with

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the true Penitent. She would not leave *Naomi*, though she not only bid her turn back, and discouraged her besides, and though her Sister *Orpah* returned unto her people, and to her Gods. But she tells her, *Whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest I will die, and there will I be buried;* Ruth 1. 11, 12. He that repents does so, he will follow Christ whither ever he shall lead him, to a Cross, or to a Stake, to a barren wilderness, or to a place of Skulls, through afflictions and tribulations. He will part with father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, and life it self rather than not be his disciple, *Luke 14. 26, 33.* For he considers, like a wise Builder, that this undertaking may cost him no less then all this. There are indeed but few such Converts

as

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as these, I fear; yet do none deserve the name that do not do this? Many indeed partake of the Baptism of Christ, receive of his Body and Blood, that will do nothing for him. There are many that follow him for the loaves, that will not follow him to the Cross: they will cleave to Christ while he feeds them, but when he commands their estates or lives, they, like the *Gadarens*, for loss of an herd of Swine, desire him to depart out of their Coasts, *Mat. 8. 34.* or they do as the Ruler in the Gospel did, who when our Saviour told him he must sell all and give to the poor, *He went away sorrowful, for he was very rich; Luke 18. 23.* But the true Convert counts all but dross that he may gain Christ, and he is so far convinced of his misery, without the mercy of God and light of his Countenance, that he is willing to accept of this mercy upon any

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Terms: And therefore he resolves to turn to God without any reserves whatever: He sets before his eyes all the difficulties and discouragements he may meet with, and resolves with Gods strength to undergo them all that he may obtain the prize.

(3) An actual and entire resignation of a mans self unto God: And this is that which perfects and compleats our Repentance. When we come to give God our hearts, which we formerly set upon the World, and upon our sins, then have we truly repented, and not till then. For he that hath truly repented becomes a new man, he hath bid an everlasting farewell to all his evil ways, to all his old familiars in *Egypt*, and is now transplanted and engrafted into a new Family: and when he remembers his former evil ways, it is with tears in his eyes, or true sorrow in his heart, when he thinks
how

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how foolish he hath been. Now he hath left his former customs, company and pleasures: He is married into a new Family, he hath contracted a new Kindred and Relatives: He obeys another Master, and is ruled by other Laws, and is conducted by a better spirit, and hath vowed obedience to another and a better Lord: His Covenants are sealed, and he hath bound himself by all that is sacred or great to an universal obedience, and he cannot return or draw back without a strange destruction. He is not the same man which he was, other Lords have had dominion over him, he hath been enslaved by his vile affections and lusts, but he is now made free by the Son of God, and he that was before a slave of sin is now a Servant of Righteousness. In a word, *All old things are done away, and all things are become new.* There is a very great

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and remarkable change passed upon him.

1. Upon his minde and understanding : For God works upon the understanding first, and does in this new creature use the same method, which he did when he created the World at first; where we find that light was the work of the first day, *Gen. 1. 3.* before that light was made there was a great darkness upon the face of the deep, till God by the light he made had chased it away. It is just so with the natural and unregenerate man, he is in a very great darkness till the eyes of his minde are opened : And the Apostle seems to tell us that God makes a new creature after the same manner that he made the old, in these words : *For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ,*

2 Cor.

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2 Cor. 4.6. Our blessed Saviour, who is the *true light*, Joh. 1.9. Came into the world, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet in to the way of Peace, Luke 1. 79. While the sinner goes on in his evil way he walks in darkness: The God of this World blinds his minde, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ who is the Image of God, should shine unto him, 2 Cor. 4.4. Ye were sometimes darkness (says the Apostle to his Ephesians) but now are ye light in the Lord, Eph. 5.8. Saint Paul himself was sometimes darkness also, I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the Name of Jesus of Nazareth, Act. 26.9. But it pleased God to enlighten him from Heaven with a light greater then that of the Sun, and then he becomes a Minister of that which before he persecuted, and is sent to open mens eyes, and

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to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, v. 18. And so it is with every man that is converted from his evil ways to God; A great light breaks in upon his understanding: His mind before was darkned, and he is now like a man that comes out of a dark dungeon, or like one that never saw before, or never saw distinctly and clearly: But now the scales are fallen off his eyes, the veil is removed, and he is restored to sight. He sees now that his sin is no small matter, and that he is of all fools the most deplorable that makes a mock of sin: He sees that all wickedness is folly, and that the fear of the Lord is the greatest wisdom: He sees that the Gospel is a great truth, and that he that preaches it hath all the reason in the World to be very earnest and importunate: He sees that Hell is no Fable, but the most necessary

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necessary and unavoidable Consequence of a wicked life. Now he sees that God will by no means clear the guilty, and that he is not so merciful as to forget to be just: He sees now how wofully the Devil abused him, in leading him aside into the ways of sin, and misconceits of God and of Religion. He sees that he hath been a fool, and walked always upon the borders of Hell, and had not the mercy of God laid hold of him, he had never seen it till it had been too late. In a word, he sees that he hath *no fruit in those things whereof he is now ashamed, for the end of those things is death, Rom. 6. 21.*

2. Upon his will and heart: the bent and inclination of that is much changed and altered; His heart is now right in the sight of God: He had no favour or relish of the things of God that stay'd with him before; So that when he prayed with his

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his lips, his heart stay'd behind : and though he had many notices of things swimming in his head, yet he had no relish of them in his heart : His good principles were weak and ineffectual, and he lived as altogether unconcerned in them. He could indeed before this great change was wrought, acknowledge God the Fountain of all goodness, and the root from whom every good thing did spring, yet then he did not live as if this were true, but still loved his sin and pleasure more than his God. But now he tastes and sees that the Lord is gracious, and what service he performs to God, he does it heartily : When he prayed to God before, he was like some Clock that strikes right indeed, but yet the hand of it points amiss, and not at the same houre that its striking gave you warning of : He prayed before as to the matter of his Petitions very uniformly

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formly and agreeably, but his heart was not right in the sight of God, that pointed at something else, and at something short of what his words did import. Thus

St. *Austin* confesses of *Aug. Conf.*
18. c. 7.

himself that he was wont to pray to God, to give him *Chastity and Continence*, (and that was a good hearing) but then his heart staid behind with a *not yet Lord*, his heart did not point so forward; for he confesses, that when he prayed thus, he was afraid that God should hear him speedily. St. *PAUL*

prayed doubtless before his Conversion, for he was a very strict Pharisee, but he did not pray as he did after God had brought him home to himself; when the Lord tells *Ananias* of his praying, with a *Behold he prays*, *ACT. 9. 11.* The sinner prays perhaps for the same things that the true Convert does, but not so earnestly, and so heartily.

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tile. He prays for the holy Spirit as a very hungry man prays for bread; when he begs Wisdom of God, *He seeks her as Silver, and searches for her as for hid treasures, Prov. 2.4.* In a word, he does not only perform an outward worship to God, but he loves him with all his heart, and is inwardly delighted in his service.

3. Upon his whole life also. He lived after the guise and fashion of the World before: He hath now left his old wonts, his sin and his evil company. He talks of other matters, he thinks of other things, and is delighted with other concerns: He that before delighted in nothing but Merchandise, or Farms and Leases, and Yokes of Oxen, in Mirth and jolly Company; in Chambering and Wantonness; Honour and Greatness, now delights in God, and in his Gospel: And do really value a *Promise* above
a great

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a great *Lease* or *Bond*: and is more afraid of *Gods displeasure* then of a *Famine* or *Plague*.

Thus I have shewed what true Repentance does imply: He that would enter into Heaven must thus be changed: No less then, all this is indispensibly required of us; which is a great work, and requires much strength and some time; and therefore to put it into so narrow a Compass as the remainder of our lives when we lie a dying, is most unreasonable. Repentance is not so *easy* and *short* a work as to be put off to that moment, when we have not only the *least time*, but the *least strength* also. And yet of all men's in the World; their Repentance will require the greatest *labour* and *time*, who, having always lived in sin, have the sins and evil habits of an whole life to unravel and undo. And thus much of my first Argument.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Now this will farther appear to be a very great mistake, if we consider that an holy life is not only necessary to a comfortable death, but also to an happy Eternity: And if an holy life must go before an happy and glorious Resurrection, what shall we think of them that lead a wicked life, and yet think hereafter to live with God in glory. Now that an holy life, and an universal inherent holiness of our Nature, is indispensibly necessary to our eternal happiness hereafter, will abundantly appear from these following Severals.

1. The holy Scriptures do very frequently and plainly teach us this Lesson. This is the constant language of them, which they speak all along. And the man that doubts
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of the truth of this, or else is ignorant of it, it is either because he does not read the Scriptures, or will not believe them: For though the holy Scriptures be in many things hard to be understood, and there be difficulties in them too great for the wisest Clerk, and many other things of less moment in which learned and religious men cannot yet agree: Yet notwithstanding all this, when they tell us the necessity of an holy life, they do it so plainly, that he that runs may read it, and there is not the least place left for dispute or controversie in this matter. This is that in which all Dissenters in other things do accord and agree; And that which may, without any learning or great scholarship, be very easily understood. For in this matter they give out a certain and distinct sound that every man may prepare himself to battel. They tell us that, *without*
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holiness no Man shall see God, Heb. 12. 14. That, if we live after the flesh we shall die, Rom. 8. 13. And that we must be holy in all manner of conversation, 1. Pet. 1. 15. They tell us plainly, that except a man be born again, he cannot see into the Kingdom of God, John 3. 3. Besides, they teach us that this World we now live in, is a *Field*, and intimate to us that our present time is a *Seed-time*, and they tell us moreover, that whatsoever a man sows, that he shall also reap, that if we sow to the flesh, we shall of the flesh reap corruption, Gal. 6. 7. That is, our harvest shall be according to our seed: so that if our works be evil, our doom must needs be sad. Besides this, they tell us distinctly and severally, what those evil seeds are that we must beware of, what those evil works are that will bring us to an eternal destruction, viz. *Adultery, Fornication, Uncleanness, Lasciviousness,*

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ness, Idolatry, Witchcraft, Hatred, Variance, Emulations, Wrath, Strife, Seditions, Heresies, Envyings, Murders, Drunkenness, Revellings, and such like, Gal. 5. 19. Nay, the Word of God gives us in several Catalogues and Rolls of those sins that will keep us out of the Kingdom of Heaven, that we might be sure to avoid them, as appears in the places following, which will deserve our very serious perusal, 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. Col. 3. 5. Eph. 5. 5. And not only so, but it also calls upon us loudly to beware, lest by any means we be deceived, it being as much as our souls are worth: It bids beware, *Be not deceived*, 1 Cor. 6. 9. And again, *Let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things comes the wrath of God upon the Children of disobedience*, Eph. 5. 6. And again the same Apostle cries out aloud, *For these things sake, the wrath of God comes upon*

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upon the children of disobedience, Col. 3. 6. And again, the same Apostle having reckoned up the works of the flesh, earnestly cries out, *Of the which (says he) I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God, Gal. 5. 21.* And again, *Be not deceived, God is not mocked, Gal. 6. 7.* In which expressions so often repeated, and so earnestly recommended, and so plainly delivered, the Apostle shews an extraordinary *zeal*, and a very great care of the souls of men at once. Whatever we are mistaken in, he would not have us so greatly mistaken, as to think there is no absolute necessity of an holy life in order to our happiness hereafter; For there cannot be a more great and dangerous error, then to think we may live as we list, and yet be happy with God hereafter. Now the Holy Scripture, that it might bear

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beat all men off from this mistake does moreover inform us, that *God is no Respector of persons*, Acts 10.

34. And that be our Priviledges and Prerogatives what they will, yet shall none of them supersede the necessity of an holy life. For

in Christ Jesus, neither Circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith, which worketh by love.

Gal. 5.9. Rom. 2. 11. 25. That we

That we are baptized into the Christian faith, and continue within the pale of the visible Church,

that we descend from never so religious Parents, and partake of all the Ministries of the Church, that

we profess our selves of the strictest Sect, and that we have a very

great discerning in the Laws of God. All this, and more then all

this, will do us no good at last (but rather inhanche our condemnation)

if we lead wicked lives. Though we have a *Levite* for our *Priest*, and

never

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never so *Orthodox* a *faith*, yet if in the meantime we have an *Idol* for our God, and our *manners* be *profane*, we are still in the way that leads down to the Chambers of death. Nay, though we say unto Christ, *Lord, Lord*, and though we could truly say unto him at that day, that *we had prophesied in his Name, and done many wonderful works*. Mat. 7. 22. yet he will not regard us, whoever we be, and whatever we have done for him, if we have been *workers of iniquity*. Nay, he would not regard us though we were of his *Kindred*, of the same lineage and blood, (Mat. 49, 50.) though we were his *Brothers* or *Sisters*, or *Mother* after the flesh. If his own *Mother* had not believed on him as well as born him, she had been a miserable woman. For she was more happy in being his *disciple*, than in being his *Mother*. Nay, and our *Saviour* him-

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himself seems to intimate no less, when after a certain woman had cried out, *Blessed is the Womb that bare thee, and the Paps which thou hast sucked:* He said, *Yea rather, Blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it,* Luke 11. 27, 28. No less then this did God require in the old Law, and in comparison with this those sacrifices and rights of his own appointment were not acceptable to him: For even then a contrite heart was unto God the sweetest Sacrifice; a slaying of their sins was more pleasing to him then the blood of thousands of Bullocks: Sincere Prayer was then the choicest incense, and the paring away their proud and callous flesh was that Circumcision that God delighted in, *Psal.* 50. 8. 51. 16. 17. *Ser.* 6. 20. 7. 22, 23. *Esa.* 1. 11, 12. *Micah* 6. 6, 7, 8. *Amos* 5. 22. Although God required sacrifices and other ceremonies, yet if they offer-

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ed up the beast, and spared their sin, that τὸ νόσθον, the Beast within them, they were not welcom to Gods Altars. If they cut off the fore-skin of their flesh, and let their hearts in the mean time be overgrown with their pride and unbelief, if they offered incense up towards Heaven, and kept their hearts below upon the lusts of the flesh, God was not pleased with such a service, though of his own appointment. Thus he tells the

* So the LXXII.
render it, Ὁ δὲ
ἀνθρώπος ὁ δεικνύων
τὴν μορφήν.

Jews, *He that killeth an Oxe (* and in the mean time spares his sin) is as if he slew a man: He that sacrificeth a Lamb, is as if he cut off a dogs neck: He that offereth an Oblation is as if he had offered Swines blood: He that burneth Incense as if he blessed an Idol, Esa. 66.3.* Such Sacrifices of fools were but πνεῦμα τῆς ῥαυτοῦ. They fed the fire upon the

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the Altar, but they made no atonement. God abhorred such services as these, for with him *to obey is better then sacrifice, and to hearken then the fat of Lambs*, 1 Sam. 15. 22. Now if under the Law God required an holy life, then under the Gospel nothing can excuse us from it. And thus much the Apostle teaches us in these words; *Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the Law but under grace*, Rom. 6. 14. After all this, one would think, that he that considers these things, and he that believes them, should no longer doubt of the necessity of an holy life, and therefore should not dare to go on in his sin, and think on his death-bed, to make an amends to the miscarriage of a wicked life, with a few good words of course. Certainly, in other things there is nothing truer, then that the faults and defectiveness of any

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of the premises, are constantly found also in the Conclusion: And if it be true in this case (as the Word of God assures us it is) nothing can be more absurd, then to expect so good a *Conclusion*, as a *glorious Resurrection*, from the *faulty premises* of a *wicked life*. And we shall judge very strangely, if we think a few good words of a dying sinner, will avail as much with God as an holy life; we cannot say he lived a good life, that never called upon God till he lay a dying.

τὸ ὅλον καὶ τὰς ἀμέλει-
μας αὐτοῦ πάντα τὰ μέ-
ρη καλὰ εἶναι δεῖ.

The *parts* of our life must be holy, before the *whole* can be called so;

We do not call a Picture or Statue fair, that hath not all its parts and proportions. I shall end this particular with the words of a very worthy Divine

Mr. Chillingworth.

against the Papists: His words are these, If I follow

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follow the Scripture, I must not promise my self Salvation, without effectual dereliction and mortification of all Vices, and the effectual Practice of all Christian Vertues. But your Church opens an easier and broader way to Heaven; and though I continue all my life long in a course of sin, and without the Practice of any Vertue, yet gives me assurance that I may be let into Heaven at a Postern gate, even by any Act of Attrition at the houre of death, if it be joyued with Confession, or by an Act of Contrition without Confession. Thus he to my present purpose.

2. But if we adde to this, the infinite and essential holiness of Gods Nature, we cannot imagine that he should receive the unclean and filthy sinner into his Embraces :

— *Quid enim sperare nocentibus agris Concessum ? aut qua non dignior hostia vita ?*

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Who can believe that God, who hates sin with a perfect hatred, and cannot endure it in his sight; *That is light, and in whom is no darkness at all*, that cast the Angels out of Heaven for their pride, and our first Parents out of Paradise for their Rebellion, that drowned the old World for their ungodliness, and burnt up *Sodom* and *Gomerrah* for their wicked lives, and hath ever destroyed the Nations for their sins, should yet entertain the sinner into his love, receive him into his arms, shine upon him with his favour, and rejoyce over him to do him good: Or that He, before whom all things are naked and open, should be so easily deceived, as to be charmed with a parcel of good words from a dying man, who in the mean time is an enemy to him in his heart. We know such a mans sacrifice is an abomination to the Lord, Prov. 15. 8. And we know God heareth not sinners, John 9. 31.

Nay,

Nay, the very Hea-

then could say, That

an unclean person

might not have com-

munion with a pure Being.

Μὴ μακάριον καὶ ἁγίον
ἔσται ὁ Θεὸς, μὴ ὁ ἁ-
γίος. Hierocles in
Carm Pythag.

We may as well expect that all the Elements should change their natures, that the fire should become cold and tame, and the Waters dry and hard; that an excess of light, and a thick darkness should amicably agree and sit down together at the same time and place, that contradictions should be at no distance, or that God should cease to be what he is, As that God who is holy, and cannot be otherwise, who hates sin perfectly, and cannot choose but hate it wheresoever it is, should be at perfect friendship and favour with that man, that loves his sin heartily, and embraces it with great delight. We deceive our selves infinitely if we think he will or can, for it is contrary to his Na-

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*Vide Cic. de natu-
ra Deor. l. 2. Plus
in Sen. Periculis.
Prudent. cont Sym-
mach. l. 1.*

ture. Indeed if the
God whom we wor-
ship, were no better
then the Heathen
gods were reported

to be, of whose quarrels, adulteries,
murders and fends, we read in the
Writings of their own Worship-
pers, then might any man soon be-
come a fit Companion of such a
Deity: Adulterers, Drunkards,
Thievs and Robbers would be very
fit mates for such false gods as *Jupi-
ter, Bacchus, Mercery*, and such like,
which were some of those whom
the Heathens worshipped. For, to

*Jamblich de vita
Pythag c. 28.*

*imitate him whom we
worship, hath always
bin thought safe ad-
vice; And he was one of the wi-
sest Heathens that said, That those
men did ridiculously, that sought for
that which is truly righteous from
any other but the gods, or those that
were like them. And he adds
very*

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very well, *Δηλον ὅτι ταῦτα περὶ ὧν οἱ πύ-
χαι οἱ θεοὶ χαίρουσιν*, *That we must do those
things with which God is delighted.*

Nor could there be a surer rule
then this, had they not bin mistaken
in the object of their Worship:

And it is likely

the Heathen

were the more

wicked upon

this score: and

if they were,

they were not reproveable from

their own principles. For why

should *Cicero* inveigh against *Verres*

for committing adultery; when

Jove himself whom they worship-

ped, had done the same; or against

P. Clodius for Incest, when their

great Deity was known to have

been incestuous. St.

Austin takes notice of *Aug. conf. l. 1*

the leud young man *c. 16.*

in the *Comedian*; that justified him-

self in his uncleanness by the ex-

D 5

ample

*Semina pene omnium
scelerum a Diis suis pec-
cantium turba collegis.
Jui. Firmich. de error.
Profan. Relig. Vid.
Eccles. Inst. l. 1. c. 10*

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ample of *Jupiter*, and did as it were animate and provoke himself to lust; *quasi caelesti Magisterio*, by the warrant of *Jove*. No better could be expected from those that worshipped such De-

Laſant. Inſt. l. 5. c. 10.

ities, and believed such things of them.

Who could expect any thing but cruelty from the Worshippers of *Mars* and *Bellona*? or any reverence to Parents from the worshippers of *Jupiter*? who would look for charity from the Adorers of an Adulteress, or for Justice from them that served a Thievish *Mercury*: They were not like to be chaste or sober that offered sacrifice to *Bacchus*, and those other false gods, whose adulteries and excesses were not only reported in the Writings of their followers, but represented upon open Theatres, that all men might know them. But our God,

whom we worship, is an Holy God,

and

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and we must be so also if we would worship him aright, or be acceptable to him. And this is an Argument that God himself uses with us, and very forcible it is, to be holy because he is so. *It is written* (says the Apostle) *be ye holy, for I am holy,* 1 Pet. 1.16. And indeed we often find this written in the Law of *Moses*, where the Jews are required to be holy because God is so, *Levit. 11.44. 19.2. 20.7. Dent. 10.17.* And therefore we may not expect any favour from God, unless we become like him.

3. The necessity of an holy life here in order to our future happiness will farther appear, if we consider the nature of that happiness, or Heaven which God hath reserved for us: There is no one thing in which men more mistake, I fear, then in their conceits about Heaven: Men speaks of it much, and every man seems to desire it as a good place,
or

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Or state in general; when in the mean time they know not what it is, nor wherein it does consist. We are very desirous of Heaven, but not careful to fit and prepare ourselves for it, The Mother of Zebedees Children would have her two sons sit by Christ in his Kingdom, but yet does not beg for them the grace that should enable them to drink the Cup, and receive the Baptism that should prepare them

for it, *Mat. 20.* Men conceive of it after a carnal and fleshly manner. Thus did he

*Vide Pambles
Sermon of 18-
20 ancc.*

that thought it a *Green Meadow*. Thus that great Impostor *Mahomet* pro-

mises his true be-
lievers a Para-
dise watered with
delightful Foun-
tains, , adorned

*Vide Amyrald of Re-
ligious part 3 ch 3.
Vide Mr. Greaves his
Description of the Se-
raglio. ch. 11.*

with stately Trees, and enriched with variety of fruits. Where
men

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men shall be magnificently cloathed, and stretch themselves upon costly beds, and be attended with delicate musick, and have Wives transcendently beautiful: Such a Paradise did that Beast promise his disciples: which is a clear Argument that the man was immersed in sensual delights, and unworthy of the reasonable soul. Much such a state do the poor carnal Jews dream, that their *Messias* shall bring them to when he comes, when they shall be feasted with great Provision, and drink of the wine of Paradise, that hath bin reserved for from the days of *Adams*: At this Feast they name the very dishes that shall be provided, and what sports shall go before, &c. Such conceits are men ready to have of Heaven: And indeed, if Heaven were such a place as this kind

*Vid. bald. Paraph
in Cant 8. 1.*

*Vide Euz. Synag.
Judaic. c. 36.*

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kind of men speak of, it would much please a prophane man, and the most wicked would at all times be very fit for Heaven. The Drunkard and the Glutton, the proud and ambitious, the worldling and effeminate would be well pleased with such a *Fools Paradise* as this; And there would be no man, though never so much depraved, but would be very fit for such a sensual happiness, But we are taught to think otherwise of Heaven, that there is *no marrying, or giving in marriage there*, Luke 20.35. And that *no unclean thing shall enter into it*, Rev. 20.27. And therefore as we would be happy, so we must be holy: For holiness is not only necessary by a *necessity of Precept*, but by a *necessity of means*. For as wickedness does lay a foundation for our misery, and a
train for our destruction, every sinner

Vide Smith's Select
Discourses p. 446.

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ner: being within the attractive power of Hell: Sin and Hell, being of the same lineage, and always twisted together: So also is holiness of absolute and indispensable necessity to our future happiness: They being rather two several notions, of one thing, then things in themselves distinct. And therefore no man may promise himself Heaven hereafter, that does not live an holy life here. We are here in a state of trial and probation, and as it were at School in a lower form, where if we improve our time well, and do our tasks, that is, if we mortifie and subdue our evil affections, then we shall be removed to an higher forme, and added to the spirits of just men made perfect. But if we trifle away our time, or spend it amiss, we shall be thrown down among Hypocrites and unbelievers. Nor can it be otherwise then thus. For what should a wicked man do in
Hea-

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Heaven; Certainly, such a state would be a torment to him if the thing were possible. In stead of being his *happiness*, it would be his *prison*. He would be weary of that state, which now he seems so much to desire. What pleasure would he find in singing perpetual praises to God, that is now weary of giving him thanks! What content would the covetous Worldling find in Heaven! There he will find no Leases or Farms for purchase, no widows or fatherless to oppress, no poor mens faces to grind, nor bargains to drive, nor money to put out, nor forfeitures to receive. The voluptuous man would find little pleasure there where is *no marrying* or *giving in marriage*, no beds of Ivory, nor meat or drink, nor Tavern or Alehouse, or jolly companion to carowse and quaffe withal. The proud man would take little delight in a constant

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stant ascribing all honour and praise to God: Such men as these are not fit for *Glory*, who are so far from *Grace*. They must lie down with the devil and his Angels, they are not fit for God, and that inheritance among them that are sanctified.

I might adde to what I have said, this also, That it is nothing but *Sin*, and the want of an *holy nature*, that makes the *Devil* so ugly, and so deplorably *miserable* as he is, nothing but this obstructs his happiness. We all look upon the *Devil* as a most odious, and filthy, and miserable creature: He hath generally with us a very ill name, and that very justly also: But we do not consider what hath made the *Devil* so ugly and so wretched: Now that is nothing but his sin against God. For God did not make him so; when he came out of Gods hands he was an holy Angel, bright

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bright and spotless: But since that his sin hath discoloured him, and left those filthy spots upon his nature, which if they could again be separated from him, he would clear up into an Angel of light, and be better then the best of us. But his Sin hath *stained* him, and *stigmatised* him now, and hath made him at once the most *deformed* and most *miserable* creature. And that man, whoever he be that lives in sin and loves it, that does the works of the *Devil*, *i. e.* that is a liar, a false Accuser of Gods children, an Enemy to the souls of men, that is malicious, envious and proud, such a man is *ugly* and *miserable* as the devil is. For, to say no more but the very truth, such a man is a *Devil Incarnate*: He differs only in *name* from him, while he hath the very same *nature*: And while he lives in these sins, the Devil himself may belong to the King-

dom

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dom of Heaven as much as he: For who can believe that a *man* should be *happy* with those very sins about him, which at the same time make the *Devil* unavoidably *miserable*: Or that *we* should ever enter *into* Heaven with those very sins, which cast the *Devil* out thence; Did not God spare the *Angels* that sinned, but cast them down to Hell, (2 Pet. 2.4.) And shall he spare *man*, and make him *happy* also, though he have the very same sins deeply rooted in his nature! It cannot be: It is true indeed, such a *man* as this may lay aside his sins, and obtain mercy at the hands of God through *Jesus Christ*; but if he do not this, the sins that make the *Devil* so vile in the eyes of God, and so miserable, will make *him* so likewise. And therefore when a wicked man pretends to despise the *Devil*, and professes to hate him, he ought to consider that these are but very
vain

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vain words, when at the same time he embraces his works. For we are obliged by our Profession of Christianity, as well as by our first Promise, *to renounce the devil and all his works.* And if we defie his name only, and do not renounce his works, we do but like the Cowardly Souldier that exclaims against his enemy whom he will not fight. It was an excellent saying of Siracides, *When the ungodly curseth Satan, he curseth his own soul,* Eccl. 21.27. When a wicked man curseth the devil, and is at the same time one of his children and followers, he does but curse himself.

If, then we will believe the Holy Scriptures rather than the definitions of a corrupt Church; and think that God is necessarily holy, and not such an one as the Heathens worshipped; and that Heaven is an holy State, and not a Paradise for fools and sensualists; we must also grant,

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grant, that holiness here is of absolute necessity to our happiness hereafter. And then certainly, this shews us again the vanity of those men that lead wicked lives, and live without God in the world, and think to make amends for all with a few good words at last (which they call Repentance) and by that means to get into a better world than this.

CHAP. III.

I shall now shew the very great danger of delaying our repentance to the latter end of our days: What very great hazards, and uncertainties, and peradventures we run when we do so,

I. It is uncertain how long we shall live, and therefore there is danger in putting off our Repentance to our old age. God never gave

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*Natura dedit usura
vita tanquam pecunia
nulla prestitura die.
Cic. Tusc. qu. 1. 1.*

gave us our life in
Lease for Years; we
are but *Tenants* at
the Will of the
Lord, and he may

throw us out of our *Cottages* when
he pleases. We have no day
granted us to pay back the lives
that God hath lent us, they may at
any time be required of us. It was
the Devils first lie, and he is always
repeating it, *Ye shall not surely die,*
Gen. 3. 4. And if he can by this
means rock us asleep he hath us
fast enough. But yet we have dai-
ly experience how vain a thing a
man at his best estate is, and how
extremely vain it is to promise our
selves any long continuance, or de-
sign any great matters here. The
Jews have a good Proverb, that

*Many old Camels carry
the skins of the younger
Camels to the Market.*
Vide Bunt. Flor. ril. Hebr.

And indeed one would think that
the

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the sudden death of our Neighbors, of our Friends and Relatives, that were younger, and stronger, and better then we, should convince us that we have no assurance that we shall live long. How many have we known or heard of, upon whom death came, and gave no warning : For so many times it is, men die suddenly when they least think of such a thing. Many a man dies in the midst of a journey, in a crowd and throng of worldly business, when they are just arrived to their preferment and the summe of their hopes, upon their marriage or their new honours, in their meals or sports, in a drunken fit or quarrel, and when they thought least of such a thing; then hath death overtaken them, and laid on them its cold hands, closed their eyes, and stopped

*In occupatus es, vi-
ta festinat: Mors
interim advenit cui
velis no'is. Quidam
est. Sen, de
brev. vit. c. 8.*

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stopped their breath, and spoiled their designs, and put an end to their mirth, and caused all their thoughts to perish. And then the man that had not time to serve God, must find time to die, and he that had not leisure to amend his life, must now lose it against his will. We often hear such tidings as this, that such a man is suddenly dead, whom we saw a little before in perfect health, and heard contriving some great things he would do ere long. And indeed there is no reason we should wonder at any of these things; for, besides that such things are very common, it is more to be marvelled at that we should live so long then that we should die so suddenly. For how very easily is this earthen vessel broken, in what great danger are we every day! Too great an heat, or too much cold; too much sleep, or too great watching; if we either

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eat too much, or *abstain* too long;
or *elie labour* too hard, we are soon
destroyed: And if we presume
upon our own temperance, yet who
can secure himself from enemies a-
broad: A wilde beast may meet
him, and tear him in pieces, *2 King.*
2.24. Or an enemy may give him
a thrust under the fifth rib, (*2 Sam.*
3.27.) and let out his soul that way,
or a fool or a Mad-man may strike
him to the wall when an evil spirit
is upon him: Thou mayst enter in-
to an house that may fall upon
thee and kill thee, (*Luke 13.4.*) Or
thy horse may thr w thee out of
this into another world; thou mayst
catch the Plague, or be surprized in
thy games, or choaked in thy
meals. The rage of a Tyrant, the
infection of a disease, the poison
of a morsel or a draught, a Clap
of Thunder, or a flash of Lightning
may quickly send thee to thy long
home; *The Lord may smite thee,*

E

or

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Or thy day may come to die, or thou mayst descend into battel and perish, 1 Sam. 26. 10. Thy life is in Gods hand, who may take it away when he pleaseth, or whensoever thou displeasest him. And then if thou die in thy sin, thou must lie down in sorrow; and

R. Eleazar. dwell with everlasting burnings. And therefore it was wholesome advice the Jew gave his Scholar, that he should repent one day before he died: His meaning was, that he should repent presently, cause he could not tell whether he should live while to-morrow; and that he should be always exercising repentance, that so whenever death should come, it might find him prepared for it. And to that purpose he makes use of the words of

Vide R. Solomon Tarchi in Eccl 98 Solomon, Let thy Garments be always white, and let thy head lack no Ointment.

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ment, Eccl. 9.8. The Jews were commanded to afflict their souls at the day of Expiation, Maimonides on, Levit. 16. 29. And one of their Writers tells us, that they were then obliged to confess their sins, and to begin their confession the night before this day of Expiation, and that before Supper also; and he gives this reason, because else perhaps he may be choaked in Supper-time before he hath made his Confessions. Alas, what do we mean to talk of repenting in our old age, when perhaps our breath may be stopt by the next morsel we eat, or our souls required of us this night; And it is the greatest folly in the world, to live in that state of things in which we shall be afraid to die. It was great folly in the Virgins, to have their Oyl to seek when the Bridegroom called. If we do not repent speedily, it is very probable we shall not repent

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at all, and if we do not repent at all, we shall be unavoidably and eternally miserable: One delay may for ever hinder us; It is here as it was with the Pool of *Bethesda*, where we find he that first stepped in after the moving of the waters, was cured of his disease, *John 5.4.* He that repents presently may have pardon; but he that slips but one season, may perhaps never have it any more; for his life may soon be taken away, and then his hopes are ended. I have read a sad story of a Gentleman, who on his Death-bed imagin'd he saw certain Messengers that came to carry him away to Hell; wherupon he fell into great shrieks, and end. his miserable

Drexel. Trib. life with these words,
Christ, c. 2. S. 4. Give me respite till tomorrow.

And *Drexelius* tells us a Story of another, of which he was witness himself; Of a certain rich man that fell sick, and in his sickness

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ness was desired by some that stood by to lift up his minde towards Heaven: He fetched a great sigh, and told them, that he did look up towards Heaven, but that he perceived that the passage thither was now shut upon him. But what need I speak of these, how many have our own ears heard complain upon their uneasie death-beds, of the precious time they have lost, and the time they want, and cry out in vain, that their days might be prolonged, *O that men were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end, Deut. 32. 39.* O that we would be wise in time, for there is no wisdom in the Grave, whther we are making haste. We had need pray with the Psalmist, *Teach us to number our days aright, and we will bring a wise heart,* Ps. 90. 12. As

[] may be rendered rightly. See Numb 17 7. Jer. 8. 6. And the Chaldee Paraph. on Ps 127. 2, Ex. 10. 29

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those words may be well translated,
That is, Grant that we may not be
mistaken in the right numbring of
our days, in thinking them longer
then indeed they are, and then this
right numbring our days shall teach
us Lessons of great wisdom. He
is recorded for a *Fool* that promised
himself *many years*. And certainly,
he can deserve no better name that
does so: we find many times, that
the men that die *suddenly*, are those
men that thought to have lived
longest. Let us not say we will re-
pent *hereafter*, when we cannot tell
but we may die *presently*.

2. But suppose thou dost live to
old age, yet it is very *uncertain*, and
a very great peradventure, whether
thou shalt have the grace truly to
repent or not. Nay, perhaps thou
wilt die suddenly still, and never
have the opportunity or the heart
to call upon God for *mercy*. Thou
mayst perhaps be given over to an
hard

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hard heart, and a seared Conscience, and tempted to curse God and die. *The Lord, it may be, may be departed from thee, and become thine enemy.* As it was with Saul, 1 Sam. 28. 15. It is most likely thou wilt die as thou didst live. What should make thee think, that the grace of God will follow thee to thy death-bed, and effectually bring thee home, after thou hast abused the love, and despised the grace of God all thy life time! Why shouldst thou think that God is so fond of thee, as that he will save thee whether thou wilt or not! Certainly we have more reason to fear, that God will no longer regard us, nor follow us with Intreaties, nor yet hear us though we cry loudly to him in our calamity: Let us well consider what the Holy Scriptures teach us in this matter, Prov. 1. 28. 29.—Jer. 11. 14. Ezek. 8. 18. Indeed, if in our youth and strength

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we remember our Creator, as we are commanded, we shall be accepted. For God hath not only commanded us to repent, and return to him, but to do it speedily, which if we do we may be assured of acceptance, for we have a Promise for it, *Ecc. 12. 1. Esa. 55. 6, 7. Prov. 8. 17.* But if we do neglect him *Now*, we have no assurance that God will regard us in our extremity. If we be profane, as *Esau* was, who sold his *birth-right* for a trifle, we have reason to fear that we shall lose our Fathers *blessing* also, and meet with the same event with him. For ye know that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of Repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears, *Heb. 12. 17.* So that although we should live to an old age, yet may we die in our impenitence and hardness of heart, in the
love

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love of our sins, and of this world :
And thus we shall do if God leave
us without his special grace, which
we give him just cause to do. It is
to be feared we shall die as we li-
ved ; the tree uses to fall that way
that it is wont to lean towards.
If we live without God in the
world, it is much to be feared
we shall die without any re-
gard to him, and perhaps with-
out so much as calling upon his
Name, or crying to him for his
Mercy.

3. But suppose we do call upon
God for mercy upon our Death-
beds, and cry out upon our sins, yet
we have great reason to fear lest we
should play the Hypocrite at such
a time as this. It is well if our
Death-bed Repentance be any
better then dissembling : We
have great reason to suspect it
is a forced, fained, and slavish thing.

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It is no wonder we cry out for *Mercy*, when we find Gods *Justice* too hot for us. We easily give our enemy fair words, when his dagger is at our breast, or his knife at our throat: When we are within the *view* of the *flames* of Hell, within the *stanch* of the *Brimstone*, and the noise of the *miserable*. When we see our selves just passing into an *eternal destruction*, no wonder that then we cry out for mercy. This may indeed affright us out of the *action* of *sin*, when yet we retain our *affection* to it. And though the sick man may cry out loudly for mercy at this time, and that with a bitter weeping, yet there are two considerations that will render this Repentance very suspicious; (1) If we consider how this Repentance commences, and is first wrought in us: It is to be feared, that it is only an effect of Gods *Power*, and

Vin.

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Vindicative Justice affrighting us, and not of his *goodness* that winns and draws us to him. We may cry out because we cannot *withstand* his *power*, when yet we do not grieve because we have *abused* his *love*. And such mens devotion is like that of the ancient Heathens to one of their Deities whom they worshipped *ne noceret*, lest their Deity should hurt them. Now most certain it is, that although the Power of God may *scare* us into some kind of Repentance, yet it is the *τὸ χρηστόν Θεοῦ*, the goodness of God that leads us to it, as the Apostle assures us, *Rom. 2. 4.* The holiness and infinite goodness of Gods Nature, that he is infinitely better then all the World is, or can be, to us is the great inducement that brings a sinner home to God. Thus it was with the Prodigal son: *When he came to himself he said, how many hired servants of my fathers have bread*

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*bread enough, and to spare; and I per-
ish with hunger; I will arise, and go
to my father, &c. Luke 15. 17, 18.*

And thus it was with the people of
Israel in the Prophet, who after
they see the vanity of running from
God, is brought home by this in-
ducement, *Then shall she say, I will
go and return to my first Husband, for
then it was better with me then now,*

Hof. 2. 7. For the Almighty
Power of God is not of it self an
inducement to a poor sinner to come
to Him, for that rather speaks ter-
ror then *Encouragement*. His pow-
er may sooner make us be afraid of
him, then fear him as we ought, or
love him as we should. *For he that
cometh to God, must believe that He
is, and that he is a rewarder of them
that diligently seek him, Hebr. 11. 6.*

There is *Mercy* with him, that he
may be feared, *We must fear the
Lord and his Goodness, Hof. 3. 5.* Gods
power may make us dissemble and

fain

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we should not then hate them. Our Repentance is in great part against our will, and therefore cannot be true repentance: We do at such a time by our sins, as a Marriner in a tempest at Sea, does by his goods, who throws them into the Sea indeed, but it is because his life is in danger in a sinking ship, and not because he is weary of his goods.

And as this can hardly deserve the name of a free or vo-

luntary action, and a matter of choice, so may we very justly suspect that repentance that begins upon no other accounts. For true Repentance is a free and voluntary Action. We must not think to impose upon God after this manner. He knows the voice of Jacob from that of Esau well enough.

—*Verum nec nocte paratum
Plorabit, qui me velis in curvare que-
relis.*

The

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The great and holy and all-wise God, will accept of nothing less than a true and unfeigned, and hearty Repentance; A forsaking our sins, and a free parting with them. But then again another consideration, that will make this death-bed Repentance very suspicious to be a piece of dissembling is this; That (2.) if we diligently observe the event of this matter, we shall many times find that those men that upon their sick-beds cried out so bitterly upon their sins, and so loudly for mercy, when God hath restored them to their health again, have embraced the very same sins which they lamented before, and have bin as wicked, and far more wicked then ever they were before. Which as it is a clear evidence that this Repentance was no better then plain Hypocrisie; so it may also teach us what little reason we have to trust
to

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to such a Repentance as this, or to measure our selves by so uncertain and very fallacious a Rule. There are many men that in a sharp fit of sickness, or some great adversity, makes a very glorious appearance: You shall hear them complain of their forgetfulness of God, and tell you how they would live and serve God if he would spare them this once. But if you look upon these men after God hath restored them, you may find them many times far worse then ever they were known to be. Such men as these are like the topps that children play with, that will go no longer then while they are whipt: Thus the *Israelites*, when they were *beaten*, then they sought the Lord. But when *Jesurun* waxed fat, then he kicked. When he slew them, then they sought him, and they returned and enquired early after their God, and they remembered that God was their Rock, and the high

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high God their Redeemer. Now a man would think this a very good people: But let us mark what follows, *Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues. For their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his Covenant, Ps. 78. 34.* — For when God delivered them *they soon forgot his works, Ps. 106. 13.* So far were they from being made better by their afflictions, which was Gods aim in laying them on, that they wearied God through their obstinacy, so that he complains of them by the Prophet. *Why should ye be smitten any more, ye will revolt more and more, Esa. 1. 5.*

In a word, it was always so with that people, that however they sought the Lord in their *Calamity*, yet in their *Prosperity* they ran from him as fast: And the Lord tells them as much by the Prophet:

I spake

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I spake unto thee in thy Prosperity, but thou saidst, I will not hear, this hath bin thy manner from thy youth, that thou obeyedst not my voice, Jer. 22. 21.

And therefore it was a wise saying of Ben Sira,
Vide Buxi. Lemic. That we should honour a Physician before we have need of him. That is, that we should honour God in our prosperity, if we would have him propitious to us in our adversity. To which we may adde what we reade in Siracides: Use Physick or ever thou be sick: Before judgement examine thy self, and in the day of Visitation thou shalt find mercy. Humble thy self before thou be sick, and in the time of sins shew repentance. Let nothing hinder thee to pay thy Vow in due time, and defer not until death to be justified. Ecclus. 18. 19, 20, 21, 22. To turn to God in our

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Our youth and prosperity is a great Argument of the sincerity of our Repentance. Whereas we have great Reason to fear that our death-bed Repentance is but a flattering of God, and that unto which we are *craned* and *skewed* up by the *errors* of the Almighty, and not *drawn* to it by the *cerds* of a Man, or the *Bands* of Love, *Hos. 11. 4.* Whereas he that doestruely repent and is converted, *chooses* to become a new man, and leads a new life, and would do so, if there were no *Hell* to *punish*, and *Heaven* to *reward* him. For he inwardly loves holiness, and hates sin with a perfect hatred. He is always acted by an inward vital principle that moves him and sets him forward. Whereas the hypocrite is moved just like a *Clock*, or some such instrument, that goes indeed, but it is no longer then there are certain weights hanging on, that they will move.

For

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For they have no *vital principle* to actuate their wheels, and continue their motion: So is the *Hypocrite*, a kind of instrument that goes by *pulleys* or *weights*, which may be taken away and laid aside, and then the motion is staid. Now the hypocrite upon his sick-bed hath great *weights* upon him, and no wonder that then he goes faster, but when they are removed, it is as little to be wondred at that he should stand still. This is excellently expressed by *Job*, speaking of the Hypocrite, *Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him? will he delight himself in the Almighty? will he always call upon God?* Job 27.9, 10. In which words the hypocrite is painted in his colours: *He cries unto God*, there's his Religion; but it is when *trouble* comes upon him, that is the *weight* that moves him. For he wants an *inward principle*, for he does not de-

light

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light in the *Almighty*, He wants a *vital principle* to continue his devotion; he will not *always* call upon God. The hypocrites Religion is a burden to him, it is not pleasant to his soul. He carries it about with him just as the Kine did the Ark to *Beth-shemesh*, who *lowed* as they went along, *1 Sam. 6.12.* But the true servant of God delights to do his Will, and keep his Commandments, and

His Commandments are *Βαρύαι καὶ ἰσχυραί*

not grievous, *1 John 5.3.* That is, they are not heavy and burdensome to him. His Religion is become natural to him, and he is in great measure the same man in *health*, that he is in *sickness*: And when in a great trouble he vows obedience to God, he performs his vows, *I will pay thee my vows which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken when I was in trouble, Psal. 6.*

13.14. By what hath bin said it will appear

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appear, that we have very great reason to suspect our death-bed repentance to be but hypocrisie, and so unavailable to our salvation. And this is another very great *per- adventure and hazard* that he runs that puts off his Repentance.

4. Another great *danger* in putting off our Repentance is this, that this is a step to final impenitence and unbelief, which is a sin that there is no pardon in the Gospel for, a sin for which Christ never died, it being contrary to the whole design and purpose of the Gospel. O consider, will it not be a dreadful thing to die in thy sins and lie down in everlasting burnings! How great will thy misery be, if thou *die* in thy sins, when

thou might'st have

*Quid illis miserius,
quibus ipse Salvator
salutis non erit?*

been saved from them; If thou art eternally lost when

thou hadst a Saviour that was ready

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to deliver thee ! would it not be a
dismal sight to see a friend or bro-
ther dragged from his sick-bed to
the flames of Hell. To hear him
howling down to the fire and
brimstone ! This will be thy sad
portion if thou die in thy sins. And
certainly when thou putteth thy
Repentance off but till tomorrow,
thou takest a step towards this sad
Conclusion. For he that is now
dead in his sins began with such
single instances as now thou dost :
when he was exhorted to repent he
was wont to put God off, with a
*Not yet Lord, and, when I have a fit
season, when I have passed my youth,
and followed the designs of young
men.* And then when God called,
he had married a wife, or hired a
farm, or is making a Purchase,
trafficking and getting gain, and
laying up in store for the Winter of
old age. And thus the man put
God off, till death stopped his
breath,

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breath, and spoiled his designs, and sent him away to his eternal misery: And then the poor creature is miserable, beyond all thought and all recovery. Thou sayst thou wilt repent tomorrow, and so perhaps thou wilt always say till all thy Sand be run out, and thy Sun be set, and there be no such thing as a *Morrow* left: when wilt thou make a stop if thou do not do it presently? Certainly, others have deluded themselves with these hopes, that are now among the *dead* and among the *damm'd*. They have said that they would repent ere long, but yet they left the world before they did this work, and are dead and miserable long ago. And how canst thou be secure, when thou treadest in the very same path that hath led so many down to the Chambers of Death? Canst thou expect the very same track should bring thee

to

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to happiness, that brought thy Neighbor to his misery.

5. Another danger in delaying our Repentance is this, that so long as we remain without Repentance, God looks upon us as his enemies, and whatever we do is not acceptable in his sight: we are in a state of nature and children of wrath; and all our prayers and confessions, &c. are not accepted. *The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, Prov. 15. 8. We know God heareth not sinners, but if any man be a Worshipper of God, and doth his Will, him he heareth, John 9. 31.* Till we have repented, God looks upon us as his enemies, for

Warre is rather a State *Vide Gros de ju-
re Bell. l. 1. c. 32* then an Action, and we

are Gods enemies till we have laid aside our affection to our sin, and be reconciled to him. While we delay our Repentance, we stand out in our enmity to God; for a

F

delay

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*Procrastinatio negandi
instrumentum est. Card.*

delay is no less
then a *denial*. He
that puts God off,
does as much as declare that he re-
fuses to be reconciled, and so does
continue contumaciously an enemy
to God. And God is also an ene-
my to him. And verily, did we
know what it meant to be under
Gods disfavour and displeasure, we
would sooner choose the greatest
miseries and torments in the world
before it: If God withdraw our
breath, we are lost for ever, and
then we shall understand what
Gods displeasure means, and shall
find that there is *no sorrow like this
sorrow*. And whiles we continue
in this state, there is a very little
distance between us and an eternal
destruction. Methinks it should
make an impenitent sinner startle,
did he but consider how little a
remove he is from eternal wrath,
and that nothing keeps him from it
but

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but a small thread of life, which as it may be easily snapt asunder, so when it is, he falls down to unspeakable sorrows. Every man walks upon the borders, and within the Neighborhood of death; we read of one that said, that the

τὸ πᾶν ὁ τῆς ζωῆς, i.e.

The thickness of the Shipboard (which

Vide Bing. Laert. Anachars.

is not many inches) is the distance that the Mariner is in from death.

And I am sure David said, there was but a step between him and death,

1 Sam. 20. 3. And indeed every man may say it truly. The next step may be into his grave: But then the impenitent sinner is in a worse case; for as every man is upon the borders of death, so is he upon the borders of death, and of Hell too.

6. By every delay we harden our hearts against God, and the oftner we do this, the more unlikely will be our Return and Repentance. To

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day, if you will hear his voice, harden
not your hearts, Heb. 3. 7. By delay-
ing to hear Gods voice we become
more incorrigible, and more re-
probate, and averse from every good
word and work; till at length we
get a Whores forehead, and refuse to
be ashamed, and faces (and hearts too)
harder then the rock that refuses to re-
turn, Jer. 3. 3. 5. 3. And then in vain
are all the Sermons that we hear, and
the judgements that we see and feel.
We are not shaken by the terrors of
the Law, nor drawn by the Promises
of the Gospel, nor allured by the
voice of the wisest Charmer. We
go on in our sins, and though God
hedge in our way with thorns, yet
is nothing able to turn us back.
Thus it was with the Jewish peo-
ple, *Withhold thy foot from being un-
shod, and thy throat from thirst: : But
thou saidst, there is no hope: No, I
have loved strangers, and after them
I will go, Jer. 2. 35.* **A dreadful ex-
ample**

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ample we have of this in *Pharaoh*; God sent to him to dismit his people; he works signs and wonders to convince him, but he hardens his heart. The River is turned into blood; he is plagued with frogs, with lice and flies; a Murrain falls upon his cattel, and boyls upon himself and servants: Thunder, Hail, Fire and Locust, and a thick darkness will not make him yield, till at last he dies miserably by the Hand of the Almighty; and he that would not *obey* Gods voice, must endure his *hand*. He that delays to day to hear Gods voice, does by God as *Pharaoh* did, and the oftner he repeats these *delays*, and reiterates his *resistances* to the Call of God, the less hopes is there of his returning.

7. By our delays we provoke God to leave us, and to resolve to have no more to do with us, nor any longer to follow us with his

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mercies. God may perhaps the next repulse swear in his wrath that his spirit shall never strive with thee more, and that thou shalt never enter into his rest; God alone can tell how long he will endure our repulses, before he cast us off for ever. He can only tell how near we are to come to that fatal point from whence there is no retreating. 'Tis well observed that *Pharaoh's* heart was hardned, after the *eighth resistance*; whether God will bear so long with us we cannot tell: We have too much reason to fear, that the next resistance we make, may bring this dreadful stroke upon us. 'Tis to be feared we are advancing apace to *Pharaoh's* hardness of heart, unto which our acts of sin do set us forward by way of *natural causality*, as well as by calling down the Divine Justice to compleat the sad change. Do we not perceive our
 hearts

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hearts grow more and more hard and inflexible; And that the tenderness which once we had wears away apace.

Res delicata fit Spiritus sanctus.

Be not too bold: The Holy Spirit of God is tender and may easily be grieved, and caused to depart from thee: His gentle fires may be quenched by thy obstinacy.

Be instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul may depart from thee, Jer. 6.8.

God deals with us, as with the Cities, *Dent. 20.* He offers us terms of peace, but if we refuse to yield what can be expected, but

πίσμα & ἀνέναντον, an irreconcilable warre for ever.

And then we shall be as without God, so without Hope in the world.

And much better would it have been, that we had never heard of the mercies of the Gospel,

which so unthankfully we have refused.

If we put all these things together, we shall find that the putting our Repentance off to our

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death-beds is very full of *hazards*
and *peradventures*.

CHAP. IV.

I shall now proceed to shew the very great unreasonableness of putting our Repentance off to our death-beds: I shall make it appear to be a very unjust thing, and very unreasonable. And that I shall do in the following Severals.

1. It is very unreasonable to serve God in the last place. To spend the greatest and best part of our time and strength in the slavery of the Devil and World, and to put God off with our dry bones. When we have a *male* in our flock, to offer up unto God a *corrupt* thing. Certainly, our Landlords and Masters will not be served thus. It is a most unjust thing to offer up unto God, nothing but the ruines and spoils

spoils of sin, and the leavings of the Devil: To present Him that, and that only, which we know not where else to bestow. We are not willing to serve God, till we can follow our *sins* no longer. We offer up unto God the *wax*, and keep the *honey* to other uses. We do as *Saul* did, who though he destroyed those things which were *vile* and *refuse*, sacrificing them to the Divine Will, yet he spared *Agag*, and the *best* of the *sheep* and *oxen*, 2 Sam. 15. And this is the greatest piece of unreasonableness in the World. For if God be our Father and our Lord, our Master and our best Friend, to Him is due the best of what we are or have. Our youth and strength, the spring of our Age, and the principal of our strength

*Non pudet te
reliquias vita
tibi reservare.
Et id solum
tempus bene
menti destinare,
quod in nullam
rem conferri
possit? Sen.
de brev. vit.
c. 4.*

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and time is only due to him.

2. It is very unreasonable to put off our greatest business to that instant, when we have least *time*, and least *strength* to do it in. Thus does he do that puts off his Repentance to his old Age and death-bed. This is as if two battels between the opposite Armies, should begin to be fought at night, when they would presently be buried in darkness, and distracted with confusion. Our death-bed is not a fit place for so difficult and comprehensive a work. Repentance should be finished, and not begun, at such a time. The Jews were forbid to seek *Manna* upon their Sabbath-day, they were to gather enough upon the day before, that they might rest on that day of rest. The everlasting rest is approaching on our death-bed; we should not then be to seek when we are entring into our Rest. This would be just as if a man should
have

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have all his days work to do when his time of sleep and rest is come: They were foolish Virgins, that when their Bridegroom called had their Oyl to seek, and in this very miserable time, that while they went to provide themselves with Oyl, *the door was shut*, Mat. 25. upon our death-bed our Lord calls us hence to receive the fruit of our ways, and therefore that is not a time to work. Besides, our death is sometimes very *sudden*, and then we have no *time*; And sometimes very *violent*, and then we have no *strength*. We are many times hurried away to our graves, and there is no space or distance between our health and death. When it is thus we have no time for any thing, and therefore none for our Repentance. But yet suppose we lie a while upon our death-bed, yet then many times we are dead as to all the great purposes of life, and the ends of Religion:

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Religion. Many times our Reason is laid asleep by a Lethargy or Apoplexie, or else mastered by the flames of a Feavor, or insolencies of a Phrensie : or at least much obscured by the steam of a black choler : And when our Reason is departed, it is too late to repent, and indeed impossible. But if nothing of this should happen, yet shall we find it task enough to conflict with our disease at that time : We shall have enough to do to support patiently under our present trouble. I

Vide Stral. Bell.
Belg. l. i. Dec. 1.

have read of a Soldier under Charles the fifth, who begging from the Emperour his Master, a discharge from the Office he held under him, and the Emperour demanding of him the reason that moved him to lay aside his Employment, gave the Emperour this Answer, *That between the day of death, and the Affairs of life, there ought*

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ought to interceed some space of time.

A wise speech it was, and such an one as is thought to have had an influence upon that Emperour, to retire from his weighty Affairs, as History tells us he did. Sure I am it carries with it a great truth, for there is very much to be done before we can die well, and it will be very unreasonable to put all that into so narrow a room as our death-bed is.

3. It is very unreasonable to put off our *main* business, and busie our selves about *small* and *trifling* things. And thus he does that puts his Repentance off till his death-bed. We account him a very weak man that goes to a Mart or Fair, to lay in necessary provision for himself and family, and yet spends his *time* there in *hearing sonnets*, and his *money* upon *gawds* and *play-things*. It is to be feared most men do thus: They live at that rate,

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rate, as if God had sent them into the world to gaze, and to feed themselves fat, to rake together a little wealth, to wear gay cloaths, or be cried up for brave men. For these are the *little* things that we busie our selves about, and not to know God, and serve and love him, which yet is the great, and indeed only end for which God hath sent us into this world. It is a sad consideration to think how long we live, and to how little purpose: History tells us of *Julius Caesar*, that when he read over *Alexander's* exploits, he wept, and told his friends, *That whereas*
 Vide Plutarch. Alexander at his Age
 Apophth. had overcome Darius,
that yet he had done nothing of any
remark. Well may we all weep, when we think that we have bin so long, and lived so *little*; that we have spent so *many years*, - and done so *little work* : That at this Age we
 have

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have not mastered our passions, not subdued our desires, not weaned our selves from this vexatious World, nor become either fit to live, or fit to die. That we should spend so much time about our profits and our pleasures, and be as far from God, and from Heaven, and farther too, then ever we were. *We are careful, and troubled about many things,* when we forget the *Unum necessarium*, the one needful thing, that good part that shall never be taken away from us, Luke 10. 41. 42.

4. It is very unreasonable to trust to our death-bed Repentance, and to say we will repent hereafter, because it will not be in our power to do it then, unless God follow us with his special grace, and enable us to do it. But whether he will do that or not we cannot tell, for besides that we give him just cause to abandon and forsake us; He hath

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hath no where promised that, though we neglect him in our health, he will certainly remember us on our Death-beds, and then work a true repentance in our hearts.

5. It will appear very unreasonable, if we consider how we do in our worldly affairs: If we should transact our worldly affairs with no greater wisdom then we do the concerns and affairs of our souls, we should be taken for *Fools* and *Madmen*. In our worldly business we walk by certain *saving rules*, and *prudential principles* of good husbandry: We think it wisdom, to secure the main, to provide against Winter, not to let our Market slip, nor to refuse a good proffer and overture, to choose good seed and a good season for the tillage and sowing our Land. We account him a fool that withstands his Market, and neglects his Seed-time, and yet expects
a full

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a full purse, and a plentiful Harvest. We think him a mad man that sows tares, and yet confidently looks for a Crop of Wheat. We call him an ill husband that runs on score, and adds daily to his debts, but is neither careful to get them examined, nor get them crossed. We laugh at a man that begins not to learn a trade till he be old, that begins not his work till night, or that does not go to school till he is blind for old

*Turpis & ridicu-
la res est elemen-
tarius Seneca. Seneca
ep 36.*

age: We should wonder to hear a very old man tell, that he is going to build himself a fair house, and that then he would travel into foreign parts, and then go into the Wars, and learn the modes and fashions of the World. Should we see a man very dangerously wounded, his life bleeding out apace through his veins, that should tell us he would seek for no help till after

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after so many days or months, how would such a thing astonish us. We should admire at the man, that having drank a deadly poison unawares, should speak of getting an Antidote the next Spring in order to his recovery. Who would not deride that man that should tell him that he expected as good wheat from the seed of cockle, as he might expect that sowed the finest wheat; and that it would be all one whether we sowed or not; or whether our seed were good or bad, so we did but trust the mercies of an Almighty God, who could send us a great Harvest without so much cost and pains; we should think him a vain man that should tell us, that he did not doubt, but in *one day* to do the *work* of a *whole life*: Or that, when he hath a very long journey to take, should affirm, that he had such a trust in the mercy of God, that he did not
question

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question but to perform his journey, though he sate still till the last moment; expecting no less from Gods Omnipotence, then what the Jews tell us hapned by a miracle to *Jacob*, when he went from *Beer-sheba* to *Haran*; they tell us, that he went it in a day, and that the earth between *Beer-sheba* and *Haran* did leap towards him to meet him, and so saved him the labour of footing it over. Such fools and mad men are we, we expect that Heaven should meet us, and save us the labour of any long pilgrimage: We look God should be so fond of us, as to be always working miracles for our sakes; and that when we will not be saved, that he should save us whether we will or not. We neglect our Seeds-time, and regard not what our seed be; we will not learn the way to Heaven, nor fight the good.

Vide Targum Jon.
& Microsol. in Gen. 28

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good fight, nor run the race till old age come upon us: Our souls are wounded, and we neglect a remedy; we have a great journey to go, and much work to do, and yet we loiter or sit still; as if Heaven were nothing worth, and our souls of no value, or as if it were the most easie thing to get to Heaven, though our Saviour say, *the gate is freight and the way narrow that leads to life, and that there be but few that find it*, Mat 7.14. And certainly, we shall find it an harder matter to get to Heaven then we are aware of.

CHAP. V.

I come now to take off those Objections that either might or have been brought against what I have hitherto said.

Obj. 1. The first I shall name, is
that

that which we read at the beginning of the Comon-Prayer-Book, before the late alterations made, cited from *Ezek. 18.* And the words as they lie in that Book of Common-Prayer are these. *At what time soever a sinner doth repent him of his sin from the bottom of his heart, I will put all his wickedness out of my remembrance, saith the Lord.* From whence some are ready to inferre, that it will be all one whether we repent now or hereafter; nay farther, that we are not obliged to an early Repentance, but may delay it to the last moment, because it is said *At what time soever.* And this is too commonly objected by men of *weak and corrupt* minds, in defence of their delays. To which I answer,

First, that though *Ezek. 18. 21, 22.* be cited for these words in that Book of Common-Prayer, yet if we look the words in the Prophet, we

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we shall find some difference. For the words in *Ezekiel* run thus: *If the wicked shall turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my Statutes: and do that which is lawful and right* (note that well) *he shall surely live, and not die.* So that in this place there is no promise of Pardon to a wicked man, unless he turn from all his sins, and keep all Gods Statutes, and do that which is lawful and right. And certainly, this imports a great deal more than a crying out for mercy. He must forsake his way, and his thoughts too, *Esa. 55. 7.* He must restore the Pledge, and give again what he hath robbed, and walk in the Statutes of life without committing iniquity, *Ezek. 33. 15.* And therefore from these places can a man have no encouragement for his death-bed Repentance, for they loudly call for a good life and honest actions.

Secondly, I answer, though God have

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have promised Pardon whensoever we repent, yet he hath no where made a promise that he will follow that man with his grace, which shall enable him to repent to his death-bed, who refuses and resists this offer of grace in the time of his health.

*Qui promissit peni-
tenti veniam, non
promissit peccanti
penitentiam,*

Lastly, we must repent *at the bottom of our heart* before we can have this Pardon; Now we know our hearts are deceitful, and we have great reason to suspect our death-bed Repentance to be feigned and hypocritical. It was a Speech of a very worthy man, that, *he that will dissemble with God in his life-time, will Mr. Greenham. dissemble with him in his death.*

Obj. 2. But some will say, God does as well accept, and as amply reward the old mans late Repentance, as the early Repentance and Reformation of the young: He gave

gave as great a reward to those that went into his Vineyard at the eleventh hour, as he did to those that went in more early, and that did endure the heat and burden of the day: As may appear from that Parable which we read, *Mat.* 20. And therefore there is no such need of an early Reformation, nor yet any such danger in a late or death-bed Repentance. To which I shall answer,

1. It is by no means evident, that this Parable was ever meant in any such sense as is supposed in this Objection: For our Saviour hath nowhere told us, that by the *eleventh hour* is meant *old Age*. Nor have we, that I know of, the least shadow of reason to understand it in such a sense: But the design of that Parable seems rather to be this, *viz.* to teach the Jews, who were Gods *first* people, that though God chose them *first* at the begin-

ing of the world, yet would he now
 make his Name known to the Gen-
 tiles, according as was foretold of
 old, and this he would now do in
 the days of the
 Messias, in the
 end of the
 World, or *the*
eleventh hour:
 and that though
 the Jews would
 repine at this
 mercy of God
 towards the
 Gentiles, yet
 notwithstanding their murmuring,
 (v. 11.) God would call in the
 Gentiles, and accept of and reward
 their services as largely as he would
 the Jews. As God rewarded A-
 braham, Moses and David, and all
 holy men among the Jews in their
 several times, so would he also re-
 ward all good men, though Gen-
 tiles, in these last times of the Go-
 spell.

The time of Christ, and
 of the Gospel, in which
 the Gentiles were to be
 called, may well be cal-
 led there *Ἐσχάτη ὥρα*,
 when it is elsewhere cal-
 led *Ἐσχάτη ὥρα*, 1 John
 2. 18. And is very often
 called, *the end of the*
World, the last days or
time, 1 Cor. 10. 11. Heb.
 1. 2. Acts 2. 17 1 Pet. 1.
 20. Heb. 9. 26. Isa. 2. 2.

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spell. And so an Ancient Writer expounds these words, who expounds the householders going out early in the morning, to be meant of Gods calling his servants in the beginning of the world to Noah; The Labourers of the third houre, to be those in *Abraham's* time; of the sixth, about the times of *Moses*; the ninth, the times of the *Prophets*; the *eleventh* houre, the times of *Christ*. And verily, if we duly weigh this interpretation, (which is neither new, nor yet singular) and very well ponder on the Antecedent and following words, and all the parts of the Parable it self, with other very many passages of the Scriptures (which I must not now stand upon) and lay them well together, we shall find no considerable Objection against it.

Secondly, suppose that to be the meaning of the place, which is pretended

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pretended in this Objection, that by the *eleventh hour* is meant *old age*, and by the other *houres* is meant not the *Age* of the *World*, but the several *Ages* of Mans life, yet it is very evident that this place is of no force in this business. For it is evident, that those men in the Parable, that went into the Vineyard at the *eleventh hour*, were not the same that were called or hired *early in the morning*, at the *third, sixth, or ninth hour*: For (1) Those that went in at the *eleventh hour* were not called before, as they themselves tell the Householder, when he asked them *why they stood idle*; They say unto him, *because no man hath hired us*, v. 7. That is, this was the first offer that was made to them, nor do we read that ever they refused to enter in when they were invited: But now the case with us is quite different, we are called upon from day to day, in

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our youth, in the early and first
 houres of our day, and we neglect
 and refuse, and delay our Repent-
 ance to our old age, and therefore
 cannot say with those in the Pa-
 rable, *No man hath hired us.* But
 again (2) It is evident they were
 not the *same* men that went into
 the Vineyard at the *eleventh* houre,
 with those that were invited more
 early, because the Text tells us all
 along, and more particularly, v.6.
 That the householder at the *ele-*
venth houre, Εὑρεν ἄλλους, found others
 standing idle; from whence it is
 evident they were not the same
 that were *hired* before: And there-
 fore for us, who are called at the
third, sixth and *ninth* houre of the
 day, to put off our work to the *e-*
leventh, is very unwarrantable. For
 it hath no warrantie from this
 place, nor is there one example in
 the Book of God to this purpose
 that may encourage us.

obj.

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obj. 3. But some will object the example of the Thief upon the Cross, who though he were all his life-time a very great sinner, yet did he find mercy from Christ at the last, even a little before his death: And therefore why may he not also have mercy upon others, who never committed those sins that that Thief might be thought guilty of.

But I shall make it appear, that we can have no encouragement from this example of the Thief to delay our Repentance, and yet to look for a Pardon at last, when we lie a dying. Our case is far different from his. For

First, it does not appear, that this Thief ever heard of Christ before, we never read that ever he delayed his repentance to this time, nor have we the least appearance of reason to ground any such opinion upon. And therefore his case is

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not the same with ours, and so it makes nothing for our purpose or excuse. For we have not only heard of Christ, but professed our selves his followers before we lie a dying, and yet we delayed a timely repentance: Now what ground of hope can any man have from this example of the Thief, when he delays his repentance to the last, when it does not appear that ever the Thief, after he heard of Christ, did delay his at all.

Secondly, we have no reason to believe that our death-bed Repentance will be so sincere as this Thiefs was: Nay, we have too great reason to think it will not be so, for besides, that this Thief acknowledged Christ in his lowest condition, even then when our Saviour hung upon the Cross (which cannot be our case) and then expressed an effectual faith in him: Besides all this he manifested as
true

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true a Repentance and Faith, as that short space of time would give him leave. He acknowledged Christs innocence, his own guilt, and his trust in Christ for a future blessedness; further indeed he went not, nor could he after his first hearing of Christ, unless his life had been prolonged. But our case is farre different, for we after our knowledge of Christ despise and reject him. And therefore our Repentance is not like that Repentance of the Thief, unless it be in this, that it is late as well as his.

Thirdly, this is but one, and a very rare instance, the whole Book of God will not yield us such another example. This was a singular instance of mercy which Christ never intended should be drawn into an example, or made into a Law; It was a personal priviledge and

*Privilegium personale ad alios extenditur. In-
f. in Inst. l. i. Tit.
2. 8. 6.*

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grace, which is therefore to be extended no farther then the person. To conclude an universal and general law from one singular instance is very unreasonable: For any man to say, because this Thief was saved at the last breath, therefore he shall also, is extreamly weak and

*Quod contra rationem
juris receptum est, non
est producendum ad
consequentia. Vide
Tit. digest. de Reg.
Juris.*

inconsequent. For besides our case is so far different from that of this Thief, we may as well, nay, more reasonably conclude our certain misery from the example of the bad; as our happiness from the example of the good Thief. No man professing Christianity will have any ground to expect to fear as this Thief did. (1) Till Christ come into the world again, and (2) Suffer again also, and that (3.) Between two Thieves, and (4) He be alive at that time, and (5) Place where he suffers, and (6) Be

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(6) Be one of the Thieves; and
(7) The good one too: which
thing I am sure will never come to
pass.

Obj. 4. Some will say, God is Almighty, and can do what he pleases: His Hands are not tied, he can save an old sinner as well as an old Saint: Nothing is impossible to him. To which I answer

First, the question is not what God *can* do, but what he *will*, and what we have reason to expect he *should*. God can turn our *stones* into *bread* for us, and save us alive, though we cast our selves down from the highest rock or pinnacle. But yet we have no reason to expect these things when we are out of Gods way. As little reason have we to go on in our sins, and say, that God can save us notwithstanding, for the question being not what God can, but what he will do; the Scriptures must resolve us.

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In that, and sure I am, from the Scripture we have no reason to think he will. But

Secondly, we have great reason to think he will not: what reason have we to think that God is so fond of us, that he will work *miracles* for us, when we despise the *means*! will he cause the *Sun* to *stand still* for us, because we have *idled away* our *day*! Or do we think God is so in love with us, as to *save* us, whether we will be *saved* or not! Hath not God told us, that *if we live after the flesh we shall die*, Rom. 8. 13. And do not the same Scriptures that tell us that God is *Almighty*, tell us also that he *cannot lie, or deny himself*.

Obj. 5. But some may say, is not God merciful as well as strong: Are not his compassions as great as his power! what pleasure then can he take in our death! Or why should we limit or restrain his
Mer-

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Mercies. To which I Answer

First, that God is certainly very merciful, and delights not in our blood. We have sufficient experience of his mercy every day. It is his mercy that hath still kept us within the *hopes of Heaven*, and under the *means of grace*, and on this *side an eternal death*: It is his mercy that he will accept of our repentance, and reward our sincere obedience; Had he desired our death he might have cut us off in the midst of our sins, and of our days, and given us a sad portion of all things among those that are eternally miserable. This mercy the very damned in Hell have had, in the time of their life, a great experience of, and yet now are eternally lost, because this abundance of Gods goodness did not lead them to Repentance, which is a most evident Argument, that the destruction of those that did abuse
and

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and contemn the mercies of God, is no objection against Gods mercie. The sinner uses Gods mercie to evil purposes, and does by it as a shipwrack'd man does sometimes with a *Planck*, upon which he ventures so great a weight, as doth sink himself and it at once.

Οὐ γὰρ ἐν τοῖς περὶ τὴν
κακῶς ἀπορῶντο. τὸ λοιπὸν
ἐν τοῖς παρὲν κακῶς
ἐμπέδων οἱ ἀνδρῶν οἱ
Hieroci, in Garm. Pythag.

There are them that would have no God at all, that they might escape unpunished;

Others would have a God, but it is to right their cause. The *Sinner* would have a God that should be all *mercy*, that might wink at his *follies*; the *Sufferer* would have a God of *Justice*, who might *avenge* his *injuries*: And every one would have what he thinks for his own turn: I know no other reason why men should make such an *Objection* as this from the goodness of God, which they would lay hold of.

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of to excuse them from an early Repentance, whereas indeed the goodness of God leads them to it. But

Secondly, God is just and holy as well as merciful !. As the *mercy* of God forbears a while, so his *Justice* will punish us at last. It will be very *just*, that those should be *condemned* who *will not be saved*. That those should be destroyed who will not accept of Pardon. Do not tender fathers, disinherit rebellious and wicked children, and bestow their substance on those that use it well ! Certainly God will do no less by us if we go on to rebel against him. The very same Scriptures which tell us of his mercies. tell us also of his Justice, and *that he will by no means clear the guilty.*

*Di Immortales
plurimum possunt,
sed non plus velle
nobis debent quam
parentes; At pa-
rentes, si pergitur
errare, suis bonis
nos exheredant.
Mactel. apud AGell.
l. 1. c. 6.*

I know

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I know not what farther Objection can be brought against what I have said, but still I am ready to believe, that what hath bin said will not be effectual to perswade the Reader to an *early Piety*, and a *seasonable repentance*. Few men will be perswaded that their *dying hour*, and their *day of Accounts* are near at hand. It were well, if men could remember that death and judgment are then many times the nearest to us when we think them farther off. That servant that saith, *his Lord delays his coming*, shall find that *his Lord shall come in a day when he looketh not for him*, and in an *houre that he is not aware of*, Mat. 24. 50. Luk. 13. 35. 17. 26. We are secure very often when we are not safe. The old world little thought of a *flood*, when they gave themselves to eating, and drinking, and giving in marriage; but the *waters* soon came down upon this *ungodly world*.
The

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The Sodomites little thought of a fire, and it rained *fire and brimstone* from heaven upon them: so shall it be when the Son of man comes: We shall deceive our selves till death undeceive us, and delude our selves with false hopes of a long life, till our Sand is all out, and time at an end. Certainly, many now in Hell little thought of *dying* so soon, much less of being there *tormented* after so short a life. The rich man in the Gospel little thought his soul should be taken from him *that night*, when he said to his soul, *thou hast goods laid up for many years*, Luk. 12. 19. Belshazzar little thought surely of the *expiration* of his *Life* and *Kingdom*, so suddenly, when he drank wine so securely in the vessels of the Temple, Dan. 3. That which we least think of does often surprize and overtake us of a sudden: It is grown indeed for a Proverb, when
we

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we would express how little we think a thing, We say, *We as little thought of such a thing, as we thought of our dying day.* It seems we think but little of it, but yet it comes quickly upon us whether we think of it or no.

CHAP. VI.

Let me then exhort you in the words of the Prophet, *Seek the Lord*

Vide Paraph. Kimchi & R. Salom. in loc.

— Sed sapientum est & quidem maturè; non enim nobis altera vita conceditur; ut cum in hac sapientiam quaeramus, in illa sapere possimus, in hac utrumque fieri necesse est, cito inveniri debet ut cito suscipi possit, nequid pereat ex vita cujus finis incertus est. *Laſan. Inſt. l. 3. c. 16.*

and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon, Isa. 55. 6, 7. That is, we must seek

while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, & the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord,

seek him presently, before the decree be past, or our life wasted or consumed, as the Jews will expound that place. We must be wise betimes, and not project to be wise only at the last cast, though we live in folly in the mean time: We must both seek this spiritual wisdom, and use it also in this life. But with what words shall I perswade this? One would think, that what hath bin said before, should be sufficient, if it were duly considered, and without that nothing will be sufficient. Yet I shall add some considerations, which if we duly attend unto, may not be unfit for the purpose in hand.

Consider then in the first place, and do it seriously, that your stay in this life *cannot be long*, but *may be very short*; and that after this uncertain life is ended, the day of grace will be past with you, and you will have none of those termes of mercy offered which now you refuse.

The

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The day is far spent with many of us, and the night is at hand in which no man shall work. Our time slides away apace, and with the very same pace do death and the grave, and the dreadful day of reckonings make their approaches to us; 'Twill be but a little time before our eyes shall be closed, and it shall be noised in the Neighborhood that we are dead; When we have breathed a little longer, we shall breath our last. After a little longer stay, and traffick and journeys, after a few nights and days, or, at most, a few Winters and Summers, we shall be call'd off this stage by death, and brought to judgement, and then our streets and houses in a short time shall deny that they know us; Then shall all our thoughts perish; and then if we have not repented in time, we shall to no purpose repent eternally. We shall be out of the reach of
that

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that mercy that now would gladly embrace us. We may then in vain call to the mountains and hills to cover us: we should therefore think upon how slender and weak a thread our eternal state does depend. We read of *Abalom*, that he hung by the head upon an Oak between heaven and earth, and whereas one would have thought he might have cut off his hair, and so made his escape; one of the Jews tells us a tradition of the Rabbins, that he drew his sword to cut off his hair, but that he saw under his feet Hell open, which was ready to receive him. How true this Tradition is I examine not, but sure I am it well represents the danger of the impenitent man, who is at all times within an hairs breadth of everlasting burnings.

Consider secondly, how gladly the

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the damned in Hell would be of those offers of grace which we neglect and despise; Might they be taken out of their *beds of fire*, and placed again in the *cooler regions* of this world, and have such good terms of mercy promised them as we enjoy, how gladly would they embrace them? would they choose rather to lie in their *flames*, then to forsake their *sins*? Did we well understand what it is to lie *down in everlasting burnings*, certainly we should not so securely go on in our sins.

Consider thirdly, what Answer can you make to God at the day of Judgment; if you continue in your impenitence; and neglect your own salvation; What will you say when God shall demand of you why you idled away your day; will you say, as those in the Parable, *because no man hath hired us*, Mat. 20. 7. That we cannot, for God hath sent his
Mes-

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Messengers that have told us both our *work* and *wages*, and beseeched us also to labour in Gods Vineyard. Will you say you had other things to minde first, your Merchandize, your Farms and Yokes of Oxen? That you cannot, for God had promised to provide us with all these things if we would first seek the Kingdom of Heaven. Will you say you were not able? That you cannot plead, for God offers his Spirit to enable you for your asking, *Luke 11. 13.* Will you say you did not think your time had been so *short*? But you had no assurance it should have bin so *long*: What shall we say then? God hath called us, but we would not *hear him*: He hath *smitten* us, but we were not *humbled*; He shewed us *mercy*, but that would not *soften* us: He *threatened*, but we were not *afraid*: He

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He *intreated* us, but we were not *persuaded*: He sent his *Embassadors*, but they could not *win* us: He told us the *danger*, but we would *venture*; He propounded a great *reward*, but we *neglected* it; He moved us by his *Spirit*, but we *grieved* his *Spirit*, *despised* his *threatnings*, *believed not* his *Word*: whom shall we *blame* now? Not our *Maker* certainly; For he gave his Son to die. Not our *Saviour*; for he did not cast us off. Not our *Teachers*; for they called upon us daily. Not our own *weakness*; for God was very ready to help us: Nor yet our want of time, for God was ready to provide for us, and we had time enough to spare in sports and *pastimes*, in pleasure and in sin, in doing nothing, and that which was nothing to the purpose. It will appear, our destruction was from our selves, and that our mouths will be stopped when God calls us forth

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at that great day of reckonings.

Consider fourthly, how many and loud Calls you have to repent and return quickly: This is the voice of your heavenly Father,

Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways,

Ezek 33.11. And this was the doctrine of Jesus Christ the Son of

God, *Mark 1.15.* And of the first Preachers of the Gospel, who call

upon men every where to repent. This is the constant language of

the Spirit in the Scriptures, and many times and very frequently in

our awakened consciences, that we should repent quickly, every mercy

of God calls upon us to Repentance, for the Apostle tells us, that

the goodness of God leads to Repentance, *Rom. 2.4.* *1 Pet. 3.9.* Our

health and strength, our plenty and our wealth call upon us to return,

and *repent*. And so do all the troubles and afflictions which we meet

withal, they call upon us to *repent*

also;

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also; the blasting of our corn, the casting of our Calves, our unreasonable Seeds-time, and our bad Harvest, the decay of our trade, and the loss of our Goods or good name, every sorrow and every sickness call upon us to *repent quickly*, and, to *seek the Lord while he may be found*: So the holy Scripture tells us, *As many as I love I rebuke and chasten, be zealous therefore and repent*, Rev. 3. 19. Nay, the judgments that befall other men also, they call upon us to *repent*. The Galileans blood that *Pilate* shed, and the death of those by the Tower of *Siloe*, these things preach to us that we must *repent or perish*, Luke 13. 3, 5. The waters of the flood, the fire of *Sodom*, the destruction of *Pharaoh*, the flames of the *City and Temple*, and all the other calamities of the poor *Israelites* call upon us to *repent*. The overthrow and ruine of Families, of Cities and Provinces,

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ces, whether by Plague or Fire, Sword or Famine, call upon us to repent. In a word, every sad calamity of our Neighbor, every astonishing Providence that befalls him. preaches Repentance to us aloud, and calls upon us to repent before the same, or greater plagues than these do overtake us.

And that may be the meaning of what we read in the Psalmist, *Thou turnest men to destruction*; That is, thou inflictest great calamities upon men, and sayest, *Return ye children of men*, that is, thou givest men warning by these judgements to *Repent* and *Return* from the evil of their ways. The many judgements of God in the world are so many loud warnings to the sinner to return and repent.

ושוב may, it is thought, be as well translated *Repent as Return*, which later makes the sense more ambiguous in this place.

Consider in the next place, that

H

God

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God is ready to receive thee, and to embrace thee upon thy Repentance, how many or great soever thy sins have been: He that repents shall be welcom unto God: That God, whom we serve, does not delight in our death, but is greatly pleased that we should re-

*Hæus tu peccator
bono animosus, vi-
des ubi de tuo
gaudeatur. Tert.
de pœnitent.*

turn and live. There shall be joy in Heaven over one sinner that repents, Luk. 15.

So our blessed Saviour hath told us more then once in that most comfortable Chapter, where we shall find this truth variously exemplified to us. When the Prodigal son was coming home, *When he was a great way off his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him:* And he makes merry for his son when he comes home, as we may read in that Chapter: Come then, poor sinner, come whiles God

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God calls thee, and he will bid thee welcom: Come thou great sinner, that hast heaped one sin upon another, thou old sinner that hast lived many years in sin: Come thou burdened and weary sinner, Christ will give thee rest: He will in no wise cast thee out: Mat. 11. 28. John 6. 37. Thou wilt make joy in Heaven, a great joy among the Angels of God, nay, God himself waits for it, and will be greatly pleased at thy Return. Thy sins, how great or many soever, shall be blotted out, thy Name shall be enrolled in the Book of life, among the Friends of God and Citizens of Heaven, and thou shalt at length sit down with *Abraham* and *Isaac*, and all the holy men and Angels of God to eternal Ages. Come away then, O sinner, stay no longer among the Swine, feed no longer on the husks, the Garlick and Onions, leave off thy sins, and foolish

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pleasures, and turn unto thy God; He is ready to meet thee, and thy Saviour to embrace thee: God hath sent his Ministers to tell you, that the Supper is ready, and he hath sent us out to call in the *poor and maimed, the halt and blind*, that is, he hath given us commission to call in the vilest and unworthiest sinners, and to assure them that they shall be welcom, *Luke 14. 16.* And therefore in the Name of God I call you, and I do it again and again. Turn unto the Lord, O sinner, and thou shalt live and not die; God never sent away a repenting sinner without mercy: *Draw nigh unto God, and he will draw nigh unto you, Jam. 4. 8.* The devil will be apt to perswade thee that God will not accept thee, that he will not pardon, and that he hath no mercy for such an one as thou art; when he cannot ruine thee by *Securisy*, he will endeavour to do it by *despair*:

despair: But believe him not, for God will receive thee unto mercy, if thou do unfainedly turn to him. Hear rather what God says himself: *As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O House of Israel, Ezek. 33. 11.* Where God doth not

only say it, but confirms it with an Oath also, that we might have a strong consol-

O nos miserrimos sine iuramento Domino credimus. Tert. de Poenitent.

tion, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us, Heb. 6. 18. How wretched are we if we do not believe God when he swears by himself, and the thing it self is so very evident and plain! If God had desired our death, he might have destroyed us long ago, what could have hindred the Almighty: He might have sent the Sinner to Hell

H s from

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from the last *drunken meeting*: The last time he let Oaths flie out of his mouth, he might have presently stop'd his mouth with *fire* and *brimstone*, and thrown him into everlasting burnings: The mercy of God hath kept him from being consumed: And all the patience and forbearance of God hath abundantly testified that he *stayed* for his *Conversion*, but *delighted* not in his death.

Consider in the next place this also, that if you neglect to repent now, and to secure your souls, that this exhortation will bear witness against you at that great day. And how sad will it be, that that which was intended for your *Conversion*, and *eternal welfare*, should turn to your *Confusion*. This will be worth our serious reflection. When we lie a dying, or when we appear before our Judge, and our Consciences are thoroughly awakened, this reflecti-

on

on will appale our hearts, and wo-
fully perplex us. When we re-
member, that in our health we
were told of these things, and in-
treated earnestly to seek the Lord
while he might be found, and when
we consider how securely we neg-
lected this exhortation, and put
God off from time to time, till at
last time was no more, how will
such thoughts as these amaze and
confound us. Go now to a man
that lies a dying, who hath thus
dealt with God, and if he be awake-
ned before he dies, he will tell you
a sad story: *Alas (will he say)*
wretched man that I am, who shall now
help me? I have been often told of
death and judgement, and of the wrath
of God against all unrighteousness, and
frequently called upon to repent, and
seek the face of God betimes: But I
have put these thoughts far from me;
I have followed my lusts, my sports and
worldly business, and made my heart so
H 4 *hard,*

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hard, that the mercies of God, nor the terrors of the Almighty could overcome it, and now I see nothing before me, but the bottomless pit, and an unspeakable sorrow; O that I could now redeem the houres which I have spent in doing nothing, or in doing wickedly: O that I had that time which I spent in Taverns and Plays, in dressing and courting, in foolish divertisements and impertinent visits, after the honours, and pleasures, and profits of the world; how could I now spend them in the house of Prayer, and the exercises of Religion? Thus do many wretched creatures bewail themselves upon their uneasie beds; Some indeed, that never make such complaints there are, although they have lived very wickedly, yet these mens eyes are opened when they approach their Judge; and are awakened with the flames of Hell about them. Now certainly, as we would not be thus extreemly
mi-

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miserable; it will concern us to think of these things before they come to pass; And would it would please the Almighty so effectually to put these thoughts in our hearts now; that *hereafter* we might not be confounded and overwhelmed with them.

Consider lastly, what I said and proved before, that you must *repent* or *perish*; That unless you be born again you can never enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. You will never see God *hereafter* without an *inherent* and *universal holiness* here; Should I teach you any other doctrine I should be a most notorious *deceiver*, and a false *Prophet*. Nay, should an Angel from Heaven preach any other doctrine, we ought not to believe him. This is the *peculiar eminence* of Christian Religion, as well as the undeniable Argument of the truth of it, that it does indispensibly require an
old w H 5 holy

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holy life in order to a future happiness; And whatever doctrine or Religion doth dispense with this, we may safely conclude it never came from God; It is true indeed, that the lives of most men, and the doctrines of very many, would seem to insinuate that this is *not true*; But sure I am, the *life*, and *doctrine* of our blessed Saviour teach us no less. And if we make that our rule, we shall be eternally deceived and undone, if we do not become *new creatures*. Nothing less than this will serve your turn at the *long run*; And therefore choose whether you will *repent* or *perish*; part with thy *sins*, or with thy God, thy soul, thy *hopes* of Heaven, and whatever ought to be most dear unto thee: The Religion of Jesus Christ, is a straight inclosure, which hath no *Posters* to let in false people at. Here is no *indulgence* or *dispensation* to be had, which

which might give a certain *Supersedes* from the labours and necessities of an holy life. All that pass into Heaven must go through that *narrow gate* which leads into it.

CHAP. VII.

And now I might have done, one would think, and conceive good hopes that you would no longer halt between two opinions, but that every man should strike his own breast, and sadly think what he hath done, and set upon an effectual and speedy Reformation. To the doing of which we have very great Arguments to move and perswade us, as appears by what hath bin said above. But yet because we are easily obstructed and kept from so holy and good a work, I shall, before I make an end, shew what are those usual *hindrances*

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drances that keep; and so greatly entangle them that they do not proceed to a speedy and effectual reformation and amendment of life.

The first *Hindrance* I shall name, is this; Men say they are *not able* to *repent* and *amend* of themselves, and therefore in vain do we exhort them to it. They can do nothing, they say, which is good: There is a *spiritual Cramp* upon them, by which they are disenabled to move towards any thing of amendment of life. This doctrine they have bin taught, and they are willing to believe it most true. I shall therefore examine the truth of this pretence. And

1. I observe the forwardness and folly of these men who plead this excuse, when they are exhorted to repent, they say they *cannot*, but yet at other times they put off their repentance to the houre of death, and in so doing they suppose they

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can repent when they will: when they *sin*, they say it is but *repenting*, and all will be well; but when they are called upon to do that *speedily* and *effectually*, then they pretend it is *impossible*. Sometime they suppose it a *very easie thing*, and another while altogether *above their power*.

2. It is very plain, that the great fault lies in our *will*; and not in the *want of power*, however we may deceive our selves. This will be made appear at the day of Judgment to every one of our faces; Nay, this may easily be made evident now also. For (1) That God commands things *absolutely impossible*, is a doctrine very false, of whomsoever we have learned it, and hath of old been thought a pernicious doctrine. For who

Execrantur eorum blasphemiam qui dicunt impossibile aliquid homini à Deo praeceptum esse, &c. Hier. epist. ad Damasum.

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sees not; if this were true, that the Gospel would then be of no use at all, if it did only oblige us, and not help us; if it commanded things impossible to be done, and should there leave us to an inevitable destruction; But the fault lies in our will: for (2) If we were willing and resolved, we should not sit still and say we could not amend, but we would try our utmost whether we could or not: At least we (3.) Should carefully use those means which God hath appointed for our salvation. Though we cannot work grace in our hearts, yet we can hear Gods Word, and read it, and be frequent in the house of prayer: The sick man cannot labour in his Fields, but yet he can take Physick, use a good diet, and follow the rules of his Physician, and by that means may become strong to labour again. (4) However we should not be so well contented

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tened in this condition, if there were not a fault in *will*.

3. Though we *cannot* alone, yet with *Gods help* we may amend our hearts and ways: We say, *a man can do that which he can do by the help of his friends*: God is as willing to help us as a *tender father* to help a *child*, carry that burden which he sees too heavy for him. It is a most true saying, that

He that sets himself upon amendment of life, will find help from Heaven.

*Qui se ad
mendationem
accingit ad-
juvatnr oeli-
tus.*

This is a very certain truth, that a Christians power and assistance is at least equal to his work: God is not so hard a Master as to command us things absolutely impossible: I shall therefore prove, that if men will make use of that power which God hath provided, they will have no reason to complain. For it will appear, that God hath commanded nothing, but what

he

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he is very ready to help us to perform; so that if hereafter we miss of Heaven, we shall have reason only to blame our selves. For if Gods *commands* are *hard* and *difficult*, yet his *assistances* and *helps*, if made use of, are very *great* and *considerable*. The Gospel does not only *command*, but it *enables* us to *obey*; It does not only *require* *obedience*, but it also *gives* *grace*. It doth indeed *expect* *much* from us, but then it doth *bestow* *as much*. I shall therefore name those helps and powers which God hath provided us withal.

(1.) He hath promised the *assistance* of his *Holy Spirit*, and this must needs be a very great and effectual assistance. And God hath assured us that he will bestow his Spirit on them that ask him, as readily as a father will give bread to his child that begs it of him: Nay, more readily, for if earthly Parents will
give

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give good gifts unto their Children, *How much more shall our heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him?* Luke 11.13. No promise can be more plain, none can be more comfortable then this is. And if therefore we do but *humbly* and *heartily* beg this holy Spirit, as an hungry child cries for bread, if we do not *quench his motions*, nor *grieve his Presence*, we shall not only obtain him, but we shall find his assistance very effectual. We shall have no cause to complain that we are weak and feeble, no reason to fear that our sins should be too hard for us; But we shall find, *that he that is in us, is greater then he that is in the world,* 1 John 4.4. That is, we shall find the holy Spirit which is in us, not only enabling us to support, but to vanquish and overcome the Devil and all his Powers; Fear not them, but remember who is on thy side, and

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side, and that God provides for thy security. Be not dismayed at the devil and all his host, the Spirit of the Almighty, that Holy Spirit of power is engaged on thy side, I will speak to you in the words of the Prophet *Isaiah*, *Fear not, O Jacob, my Servant, and thou Jeshurun whom I have chosen: For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy off-spring, Isa. 44. 2, 3.* A Christian hath greater strength then he is aware of, a greater power engaged for him then against him. Indeed he is apt to be afraid and to despond, but that is because he does not know his own strength. The Prophets servant was more afraid then he needed, when his Master was besieged, but the good Prophet bids him not fear, *For they that be with us, says he, are more then they that be with them, 2 King. 6. 16.* And
his

his servant saw it too when his eyes were opened. It is just so with the weak Christian; the devil perswades him he hath great Armies and Hosts against him, but if his eyes were open, he would see his strength greater then his enemies. If God be with us, who can be against us? Now the holy Spirit of God will help us mightily, if we humbly beg his aid, and cherish his motions, and sincerely follow his guidance and his conduct.

2. Another help, and very great encouragement which the Christian hath, is the consideration of the life and death of our Lord Jesus Christ. That great example which he hath left us will be of very great moment to our amendment, if we do but duly reflect upon it. The sight of this brazen Serpent one would think, should cure our distempers, and heal the corruption of our natures. The great example of
our

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our Lord, were it always before
 our eyes, how would it animate
 and encourage us in our Christian
 course! Methinks we should ad-
 venture on that path which our
 Lord hath walked in before us: we
 should not be afraid of those diffi-
 culties which our Lord hath over-
 come: nor dismayed at those trou-
 bles and enemies, which the Cap-
 tain of our salvation, did most un-
 dauntedly despise and conquer. It
 is a great encouragement to the
common souldier to see his General
 engage himself in the greatest dan-
 gers, and to triumph over them;
 such an example shews him at once
 what he *may* do, and what he *ought*.
 And verily, the example of our
 blessed Saviour should have the
 same influence upon us: How can
 we be *proud*, when he was *meek* and
lowly in heart! Why should we
complain, when he was *patient* even
 unto death! we may well forgive

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an enemy, when our Saviour prays, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do; and well may we be contented with our condition when we remember the words of our Saviour, when he was about to drink the most bitter cup, Not my Will, but thy Will be done.

7. Another help the Christian hath is, the intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ in Heaven for him: Did he rightly consider Jesus Christ at the right hand of his Father, he would not certainly be thus feeble hearted. This consideration would adde a mighty vigour, new strength and courage to every drooping Christian, and to every young Convert. Though our Saviour died upon the Cross, yet he revived again, and is yet alive, and appears before God in our behalf: *He is able to save them unto the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

Hear

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Hear this for thy great comfort: thou hast an High Priest in Heaven, one that can pity and compassionate thee, and one that will help and succour thee: One that knows thy wants, and pities thine infirmities: *We have not an High Priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities: but was in all points tempted like as we are. And in that he himself suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted,* Heb. 14. 15. 2. 18. These words bring with them a very great consolation to the drooping sinner: He is not left alone, and forsaken, God is with him; His blessed Saviour hath been tempted himself, and even now is very mindful of those that are tempted.

The next *Hindrance* I shall name is this, which some men may be ready to stumble at. They judge thus, if God have elected and chosen them, his Decree shall stand, and they

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they shall certainly be saved at last;
But, *say they*, if God hath passed us
by, then all our endeavours will be
to no purpose. And therefore we
shall not need be solicitous about
such matters as are already *fixed* and
determined by the *unalt. rable* Coun-
sel of God, and who hath resisted
his will?

And thus does the devil miser-
ably cheat and delude the poor sin-
ner, by his strange reaches and ar-
tifices. Now I shall say something
to this pretence in these following
Severals.

1. It is certain that Gods decree
is not the rule of our life, but his
written Word and declared Will.
If we open our Bible we shall finde
that, *He that believes shall be saved.*
This is the language of the Holy
Scriptures: 'Tis a great piece of
pride and folly in us, to be gazing on
high for our direction, when our
way lies so plainly before us. We
need

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need not climb into Heaven to make a search or no, whether or no we are enrolled in the Book of life. *The World is nigh thee: if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved, Rom. 10. 7, 8, 9.* If we repent and believe the Gospel, it will go well with us at the last and great day; but if we live and die in our sins, we shall be unavoidably miserable; if we obey the Gospel, no decree of God will shut us out of Heaven. And if we continue in our sin and unbelief, no decree of his will bring us thither.

2. It is agreed on all hands, that there is no decree of God shuts up

a man under a ne-

Bishop Davenant a-
gainst *Hoord*, c. 2.

cessity of sinning
and being damned.

Sin does not follow from Gods pass-
sing a man, as an effect flows from

its

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its proper and true cause, and therefore a mans damnation cannot flow from it.

3. And therefore at the day of judgement, the sentence of Condemnation will not lay hold upon men, because *they were not elected*, but because *they were wicked, and did not obey the Gospel*. It shall be said to the wicked at that day, *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, &c.* And wherefore is it? Not because they were inevitably decreed to it, but for their own wickedness, as it follows, *For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink, &c.*

4. If Gods decree were to be our rule, no man could have any ground at all for his faith, and the Gospel would be a most useless and ineffectual thing, which would be most absurd to believe. For we know that there is in the Gospel the
I greatest

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— greatest ground for every mans *faith and hope* that is imaginable: We have great encouragement to receive the mercy which God offers us by his son: If we do not shut our selves out, our Saviour doth not exclude us. The Gospel opens a large door of hope, if we do not shut it upon our selves. *Now that cometh to me,* says our Saviour, *I will in no wise cast out,* John 6. 37. Did our Saviour put any back, because they were *not elected*, and therefore he could not receive them? Did he require any more then this, that they should *repent and obey the Gospel*? If he be so *merciful* as not to shut us out, why should we be so *cruel* as to exclude our selves? Did the Apostles and first Preachers of the Gospel, require any more of their Converts but *faith and repentance*? Was not this all that *Philip* required of the *Ethiopian Eunuch*, and *St. Paul* of the *Coaler*, that

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that they should believe in the Lord Jesus? *Acts* 8. 36, 37. 16. 30, 31. No man that believes shall miscarry, and there is in the Gospel all possible encouragement for our faith.

And therefore ought we not to make the way to Heaven more narrow than it is, and to ruin our selves by our groundless fears, when our duty is so plain, and our encouragement so great. It will well become us to work whiles it is day, before we are buried in an eternal darkness. If we sit still whiles our time spends, and our day makes haste from us; if we dispute over our work, and neglect to do it, we shall soon sit down in everlasting sorrows. 'Tis a sign we neither love our work nor yet our Master, when we are so easily discouraged from it. Sure I am, that he which values his life, will take care how to preserve it, though he should be-

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lieve the term of it *fixed* and not *moveable*: For certain it is, that he will die if he sit still and do nothing, and so shall we also if we be not wise betimes.

Another *Hindrance* is this. Men are not willing to repent as yet, because they look upon Religion as a very *hard saying*, a *Melancholick* and very *grievous discipline*: And however it may become sage, and aged persons, it is not thought fit for the active and the young, who must not look to see a good day ever after. This generally is the pretence of young persons against a religious life: I shall desire these men to consider impartially these following things.

1. Whether it be not a very unjust thing that those men should pass this censure upon Religion, that never made any trial of it. 'Tis very unequal, that the same man should be both *Accuser* and *Judge*,
And

And that a man should *condemn* before he hath *convicted*; Now this is the pretence of the profane and irreligious, who have no reason to pronounce against Religion, which they have had *no experience of*. A *blinde man* is an incompetent Judge of colours, but yet not more incompetent then these men in the matters of Religion; Christ himself will not escape a *severe sentence*, if *Pontius Pilate* may be allowed to be the Judge, and his *enemies* his *Accusers*.

2. Let us consider which is the harder saying of these two, *Repent*; or *Perish*: *Repent*, or *lie down in everlasting burnings*. Which is the harder saying of these two, *Repent and believe the Gospel*, Mark 1. 15. Or, *depart ye cursed into everlasting fire*, Mat. 25. 1. Certainly, the sinner that shall fall into the hands of Gods Justice, will find no sorrow like that sorrow: And though

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he may now think *Repent* an hard saying, yet he will find *Depart ye cursed* very much harder. The people thought *Solomon's* an heavy yoke, but that was light to that which they must expect from his Son, whose little finger would be bigger then his fathers loins. We must bear the yoke of *Christ*, or, the chains of darkness: we must return unto God by a new life, or else be turned into Hell with all the Nations that forget God.

3. The injunctions of Sin and Satan are *hard sayings* also, nay, *harder* then the exercise of Religion, and therefore the sinner hath no reason to use this pretence. Men serve an hard Master when they serve the devil or their own lust; and yet this they do without complaining, though they command them unreasonable and contradictory things, and in stead of rewarding them for their pains, deprive them
of

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of their innocence, their peace and comfort, the favour of God, and the hopes of Heaven. And yet we complain that God is an hard Master, though he both *reward* us, and *help* us to *do* our work. Did we serve God as industriously as we serve the devil and the world, we might be happy with the same pains that now we are miserable. It is no small pains the sinner many times is at to be undone. He digs his grave, aye, and makes his way to hell with no small difficulty. We can take any *pains* to be *miserable*, but will take none to be *happy*. If the thing were rightly considered, there is more of *pain* in a dissolute life, then in a Religious; in the *works* of the *flesh*, then in the *fruits* of *righteousness*, and of the *Spirit*. When the Apostle reckons up good and evil

Ἐργα σαρκὸς ὅτι ταῦτα
καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ καρπὸς τοῦ
πνεύματος ἵνα ἡμεῖς
ἐκφύλαξ. in Gal,
5. 19.

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works, the good he calls the *fruits* of the *Spirit*, which is very kindly expressed; but the evil he calls the *works* of the *flesh*; as it is thought, to let us know the *difficulties* and *labours* of a *sinful course*, Gal. 5.19.

—22.— And certainly, if we would be at the pains to consider it, we should find that those *fruits* of the *Spirit* are much more easie and joyous then the *works* of the *flesh*. Let us but compare them a little, and we shall find it true. *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.* What is there here that will put us to any pain or sorrow: Nay, they afford us much quiet, and are attended with an ease that the *works* of the *flesh* will not admit of: Now among the *works* of the *flesh* he reckons *Adultery, Hatred, Variances, Strife, Seditions, Envyings, Murders, Drunkenness, and Revellings.* Now what

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what sorrows do not these things bring upon us? who can express the sorrows and pain of *Adultery* and *Drunkenness*! the torments of *Envy*! the *turmoils* and *confusions* that come from *Strife* and *Seditions*! the *uneasiness* of *Hatred* and *Variance*! and the very *Hell* which he lets into his soul, who is guilty of *Revellings* and *Murders*! will any man believe that *Drunkenness* is easier then *Temperance*; Or that *love* hath as much of pain as *Hatred* and *Envy*; or that the *chaste* meet with as many sorrows as the *Adulterer* doth; may not any one perceive, that *joy* and *peace*, and *gentleness* and *meekness*, are much more pleasant then *Variance* and *Revellings*, *Seditions* and *Murders*.

So that the sinner hath no reason to use this pretence against Religion; for 'tis but a cheat and delusion.

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tion: 'tis a false report brought up by a wicked Spie. The devil does by Christian Religion as the old Heathens did by Christians. They put them into the skins of wilde beasts, and then they worried them. He misrepresents a most excellent Religion, and then his instruments assault it. But certainly, the sinner in the mean time will be left without excuse, he is afraid of that which would not hurt him: And those that have been industrious in the service of God can tell him, that they can find no fault with their Master or their work.

4. Let him that thinks Religion so great a slavery, look at the end of it. 'Tis great wisdom to consider the end of a matter, how it closes and shuts up. We use to say, *We must not praise a fair day till night.* And it was wisely answered

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ed of him, that was asked his opinion of two persons, whom he thought the happier, when he replied, *that it could not be known which was the happier man till they were dead.* That is well that ends so. Who would not die the death of the righteous, and who would not desire that his latter end might be like his: We see but the *saddest part* of Religion in this world, the more *lightsome* part remains for us, when we shall be added to the spirits of just men made perfect. Now we have the bitterest draught, our Saviour keeps the best wine to the last. The Devil does not do thus. He deals with us as *Fael* did by *Sifera*, who gave him fair words, covered him with a Mantle, and gives him milk to drink in his thirst: But she conceals the Nail and the Hammer wherewith she opened a way for his soul to flie out.

Thus

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Thus the Devil does with us, he tells us fair stories of what he will give us, if we will be his servants, but he hides the hook under his bait; he says nothing of the hammer and nail, of the Instruments of death which wait for us.

Another *Hindrance* is a misunderstanding of the design of Christs Death, and an ill use which we make of it. The most wicked and dissolute will say, he hopes to be saved by the blood of Christ, who died for sinners, and therefore they think they have no more to do, but strongly to rest themselves upon the blood of Jesus, and by that means excuse themselves from an obedience to the Lawes of Christ. But

1. They

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1. They make an ill use of the death of Christ and encourage themselves in their sinnes, for Christ died not only to deliver us from the guilt and punishment, but also from the Power and Dominion of our sinnes. He gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purifie unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works: Tit. 2. 14. It is true indeed, There is now no Condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. But who are they? Who walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit, Rom. 8. 1.

2. It is certain, that whatever Christ hath suffered, will do us no good unless we own him to be our Lord and Saviour, unless we repent and believe the Gospel, that is, unless that
we

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we perform the condition of the New Covenant. For though Christ have done his part in order to our recovery, yet he hath not done *ours* also; He hath left us something to do; viz. to perform the condition of the Gospel. We must have a faith and repentance, or else we shall be excluded from the mercy of the Gospel. Now we cannot be said to believe in Christ unless we do obey him, unless we receive him as our Lord,

*Quid est igitur fides? O-
piator fideliter hominem
Christo credere, i. a fide-
lem Deo esse, h. e. fide-
liter Dei mandata ser-
vare. Salu. de Gub. Dei
1.2.*

otherwise we have but *isane* for *saub.* What says the Scripture in this matter? It

tells us, that *Christ being made per-
fect* (or being consecrated by his death on the Cross, as the Jewish Priests were consecrated by the Ceremonies of the Law of Moses) he became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him, Heb. 5. 9.

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Our Saviour tells us plainly, *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; And he that believeth not* (or as it may be very well rendred,) *he that obeyeth not*

ὁ ἀκούων τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ οὐκ ἔσται ζωὴν ἔχων *the Son shall not see life; but the*

wrath of God abideth on him, John 6:36.

Another great Hindrance is our worldly affairs and business. Our Farms and Yokes of Oxen; the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, are the great enemies to Religion and Amendment of life. This covetousness made Judas betray our Saviour, and the Pharisees deride him, and Demas forsake him, and the young man go from him sorrowful, the Gadarens weary of him, and the wicked world persecute him in his followers.

But let such men consider, how sad a bargain it will be to gain the world,

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World, and lose their soul. No-
thing can make amends for such

Plutarch. *de his qui*
sero à numin pun.

a loss: We read
of one *Lysimachus* a
King, who was for-

ced to resign his Kingdom to his
enemies for something to allay his
heat, and satisfy his thirst, who
when he drank, complained of his
own calamity, *Who for so short a*
pleasure should be deprived of so
great a Kingdom. Well may the
sinner cry out then, who for a little
wealth or honour in this world,
hath not only deprived himself
of an eternal Kingdom, but lie
down also in endless sorrows.
How infinitely will this perplex
him hereafter, when he shall be
in the regions of darkness and
of sorrow, to think that he should,
in pursuit of the world, lose
his soul, and then at once lose his
soul and the world too.

Another

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Another *Hindrance* is an opinion that our sins are greater then can be forgiven: They have continued so long in their great and hainous sins, that they fear they are not now within the reach of mercy. But such a man must know,

1. That Gods thoughts are not as our thoughts. He tells us, *If the wicked forsake his way, he will have mercy upon him, and he will abundantly pardon. For, says he, my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways. Isa. 55. 7, 8.* And certainly, there is not less mercy in the Gospel, then there was under the Law, but more. Those sins which under the Law could not be expiated, will under the Gospel upon our faith and repentance be forgiven. This is very evident, and St. Paul tells us no less in these words,

By

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By him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses, Act. 13. 39.

2. Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. He came to heal those that were sick. The more sensible we are of our sins and spiritual maladies, the more need have we of a Saviour, and the greater assurance that he will receive us. *Come ye to me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest, Mat. 11. 28. And him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out, John 6. 37.* Thy sins must not discourage thee from coming to Christ, who came into the world for such, and hath received as great sinners as thou art, as you may see 1 Cor. 6. 11. *Such were some of you, but you are washed, &c.* If thy sins be as scarlet, yet if thou art ready to part with them, they shall become
as

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as white as snow, Isa. i. 16, 17, 18,

The last *Hindrance*, and I fear, the most common is the neglect of the ordinary means of grace, *Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God*, Rom. 10. 17. But some are so prophane, and some so proud that they will not hear at all: And for those that do, yet they take no care how they hear: They neither prepare before-hand, nor attend in the service, nor yet consider of it afterwards. The Preacher is looked on as *Lot* was by his sons. *As one that mocks*. And though God have written, and we preach the great things of the Law, they are counted as a *strange thing*, Hos. 8. 12. We hear indeed, but we go away and forget what manner of persons we were; we go away, nor the wiser, nor the better for it; And that

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that because we came thither with no hearty desires to get more knowledge or more grace: Should God make a search in one of our Assemblies, and proceed from highest to the lowest, he would, I fear, find but few among us that had bin upon our knees before we came together to ask his blessing upon his Word; few that come with any longing desires after the sincere milk of Gods Word, that they might grow thereby. Perhaps some might be found that could not tell for what end they were come together. And so long as we are thus careless and remiss in those things which God hath appointed for our salvation; 'tis no wonder we proceed to no Reformation.



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